55

FIVE LETTERS OF ADVICE:

Humbly offered: The

I. To *Parents:* Concerning the *Education* of their *Children,* in the *Fear of* God.

II. To *Children:* To excite them to *Remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth.*

III. To the *Young* and *Middle-Aged:* To warn them of ſome of the *Snares of Life.*

IV. To the *Aged:* To [redacted] them to improve their *preſent Time,* for a *bleſt Eternity.* And the

V. To *All Thirſty Souls:* To invite them to *come to Chriſt,* and to *take the Water of Life;* which He hath promiſed to give them *freely.*

By a *Well-Wiſher* to the *Souls of Men.*

Doth not Wiſdom cry? and Underſtanding put forth her Voice?

Unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Man, Prov. viii. 1, 4.

LONDON:

Printed by J. Hart in *Popping's-Court, Fleet-Street:* And ſold by J. Lewis, in *Pater-noſter-Row;* and G. Keith at the *Bible* and *Crown* in *Grace-Church-Street,* M DCC LIV.

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II. To Children: To excite them to Remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth.

III. To the Young and Middle-Aged: To warn them of some of the Snares of Life.

IV. To the Aged: To [illegible] them comfortable Hopes, for a [illegible]. And the

V. To All Thirsty Souls: To invite them to come to Christ, and to take the Water of Life; which He hath promised to give them freely.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By a Well-wisher to the Souls of Men.

Doth not Wisdom cry? and Understanding put forth her Voice?

Unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Men. Prov. viii. 1, 4.

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[Price 6d. bound.]

LETTER I. To *Parents*: Concerning the *Education* of their *Children*.

My Dear Friends,

YOU that are *Parents*, permit me humbly to offer to your Conſideration, a *Word of Advice* concerning the *Education* of your *Children*; addreſſing you under Two Sorts. And on this Head, I wou'd give,

Firſt. A Word of Advice to ſuch Parents who are *Unconverted*; who have not yet, by the Efficacy of Goſpel-Grace, been *turned from the Power of Satan, unto God.* And as the Advice that I would give, chiefly reſpects the Good of your Childrens *Souls*: Alas! you yourſelves, not having a due Senſe of the Worth of your *own Souls*, cannot have that great Regard to what relates to *theirs*, as you *ought*. But yet, have, & ſhew as much Concern about the Welfare of your Childrens Souls, as you *can*. Hath God given you *Children*: Be perſuaded, that He hath given you the *Charge of their Education*, of training them up in the *Fear of the Lord*. As Prov. xxii. 6. with xv. 33. *Train up a Child in the Way he ſhould go:* — *The Fear of the* LORD *is the Inſtruction of Wiſdom.* And the *fifth* Commandment of God's Law, which obligeth Children to Honour & obey their Parents; obligeth Parents to Rule & govern their Children in the Fear of God, to inſtruct, direct, & command them according to his Word. That ſame Injunction, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*: Which obligeth *Children* to love, fear, & obey their *Parents*; is equally binding to *Parents*, & obligeth them to love, revere, & obey *God*, their *Father* by Creation; in teaching his Laws & Statutes to their *Children*: And alſo to love & honour his *Church*, as their *Mother* by Profeſſion; in teaching & ruling their *Children*, according to the Truths of *God's Word*, which are

taught in the *Chriſtian Church:* Of which all Perſons in a *Chriſtian Nation*, profeſs themſelves to be *Children.* And be perſuaded, you that are Parents of Children, that unto God, who hath given you the Charge of their Education, you muſt give *Account*, of this great *Truſt*, committed into your Hands; of your Performance, or Non-performance thereof.—But perhaps ſome that hear theſe Lines may ſay,

Objec. Alas! I *can't read*; how then can I teach my Children the Truths of *God's Word?* As I don't know ſo much as *others*; God will not require ſo much of *me*, as of thoſe that can read.

Anſ. Sad it is that in a *Chriſtian Land*, there ſhould be any Ground for ſuch an Objection; which is rais'd by many. But however, tho' you that can't read, han't that advantage of frequent Converſe with the Word of God, as others have; yet improve all the Opportunities given you, to get the Knowledge of the revealed Will of God in his Book.

And I doubt not, any Neighbour that *can* read, wou'd now & then *read* a Chapter in the Bible to a Neighbour that *cannot* read, if deſired. And much for Soul-Advantage would it be, if Neighbours employ'd that Time which they ſpend with each other in trifling Diſcourſe, in Reading & Converſe about the *Word of God.* In vain it is to ſay, "We han't Time:" For we have all of us more *Time*, than we improve *well.* And as we are Creatures made for *Eternity*, for an eternal Exiſtence in Happineſs or Miſery, Perſons ought in Love to God, to Themſelves & Children, & to their Neighbours & theirs, to redeem & improve their Time, for Reading & Converſe about thoſe Things which belong to their eternal Advantage.—Again, You that can't *read* the Word of God yourſelves, *you* in an eſpecial Manner, had need be ſwift to *hear* the Word preach'd, & diligent in your Attention to, & Retention of, the Truths delivered. In *England*, this favour'd Nation, God gives us the Miniſtry of his Word plentifully; & thereby affords great Opportunities for the Knowledge of his Will in his ſacred Book, to the moſt Ignorant & Unlearned. — Another Thing, that I would earneſtly recommend to *you* that can't read, is *Prayer.* If you can't *read*, you may *pray.* Pray as you

can.

can. Aſk the Father of Mercies, to give you his *Holy Spirit*, as the *Spirit of Grace & of Supplications*; to teach you *what to pray for as you ought*, & to enable you to cry unto God for Wiſdom, that He would open your Underſtanding, & give you the Knowledge of his bleſſed Will in his Word: For the Good of your own Souls, & of your Childrens; that you may bring them up in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* And before all your *Hearing* of the Word of God, read or preach'd, & your Converſe about it in Heart or Lip, lift up your Soul in *Prayer* to God, for his *Bleſſing* to attend the ſame. For an excellent Means is this, of getting Underſtanding in the Mind of God reveal'd in the Scriptures; & without it, your Hearing may be in vain. *In all thy Ways acknowledge Him*, (the LORD) *& he ſhall direct thy Paths*, Pro. iii. 6. And if you that can't read, are not diligent to pray & hear, to improve the Means which God affords you for the Knowledge of his Will in his Word, in order to the Training up your Children in his Fear; your *Ignorance* will be no Excuſe *for*, but an Aggravation *of*, your Neglect of Duty: Inaſmuch as it was *wilful.* Be perſuaded then, to improve all the Opportunities which God gives you, for the Knowledge of his Will; & be faithful to inſtruct & rule your Children in his Fear, according to that Meaſure of Knowledge which you have attained; & in ſo doing, God will give you more.—And as God is the Author of *ſpecial, ſaving Knowledge*, of that Knowledge of his Will in his *Word*, of Himſelf in his *Son*, unto which *eternal Life* is annexed, yea, which is the very *Beginning* of it in the *Soul*; it is your Duty to ſeek Him for *that.* And who knows but you may find Grace in his Sight? Many of thoſe who could not read, have had the Spirit of God given them, to bring his precious Word to their Minds, & to open & apply it to their Hearts: Unto their *Faith in Chriſt, & Joy unſpeakable, & full of Glory*: And to their Guidance into all the Paths of *Duty*, of Purity & Holineſs; unto their *eternal Happineſs.*—Great Encouragement then is there; for the moſt Ignorant & Unlearned to ſeek GOD, to fear & ſerve Him, & to teach the ſame unto their Children.

And

And unto you that *can read*, what ſhall I ſay? What will *you* ſay, if you ſhould neglect Converſe with the *Word of God*, & bringing up your Children according to the *Rules of it?* Will you not be without *Excuſe?* I well know, that you who are unconverted, however capable of reading the *Letter* of God's Word, are incapable of knowing the *Spirituality*, *Myſtery* & *Glory* thereof, without the *ſpecial Illumination* of the *Holy Ghoſt*. But for this Bleſſing, for the Good of your own Souls, & of your Childrens, that you may be more capable of guiding them in the *Way* that leadeth to *Life*; you ought to *pray*: As well as for the *common Illumination* of the *Spirit* in the *Letter* of the Word, in order to the *external* Government of your Children. And if you *neglect* the Reading & Hearing of God's Word, & Prayer for a Bleſſing thereon, when you can read & hear, & may & ought to pray; & ſo *neglect* the Training up your Children in the Fear of God: You will at laſt, moſt certainly be found *inexcuſeable* & exceeding *guilty*.

Unto you all then, that are Parents, that can, or cannot read, let me earneſtly recommend the *Care* of your Childrens *Souls*. Aye, tho' you yourſelves are *unconverted*; & ſo have not a due Senſe of the *Worth* of Souls, of your own nor theirs. Read the Word of God, you that can; Hear it, you that cannot; Yea, both of you hear it diligently; & pray for a Bleſſing thereon, in order to your own Information, and the Inſtruction of your Children. For ſo much Knowledge you muſt needs have, That their *Souls* are *immortal*. And can you ſo tenderly care for their *Bodies*, to feed & cloath them unto temporal *Life*; & be content that their *Souls periſh eternally?*

For your dear Children then, be concerned, not only to feed & cloath their Bodies, & to bring them up to *work* at the lawful Employments of Life, which is your Duty; but eſpecially be concerned for the Good of their *Souls*. And in order hereto, frequently inſtruct your Children as you can, 'That *God* was their *Creator*: That *Man*'s 'chief *End* was to *Glorify God*, & to *Enjoy him forever*: 'That all Men were made *upright* in *Adam*, that firſt 'Man: — That God gave to Man a *Law*, a Command-'ment, in which the whole *Moral* Law, in the Ten 'Command-

'Commandments, was included; which he brake, by 'eating of the forbidden Fruit: That *all Men* have *ſinned* 'in Him, & *fell* with him in his firſt Tranſgreſſion; from 'that State of Purity & Happineſs in which they were 'created, into a State of Sin & Miſery; & as *Sinners*, 'are deſerving of *Death*, ſpiritual, temporal, & eternal. '—That God of his great Love & rich Mercy, hath 'given his *own Son*, *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, to fulfil the 'Law's Requirement, & endure its Penalty, to obey & 'die for Sinners, to take away their Sins, & make them 'righteous in the Sight of God; to ſave them from all 'Sin, Miſery & Death, unto all Holineſs & Glory in '*Life* ſpiritual & *eternal*.—That this Salvation is to be re-'ceived only by *Faith in Chriſt*: That this Faith is the '*Gift of God*: And that unto *Him*, all, even little Chil-'dren, ought to *ſeek* for it; that they might ſee their *Dan-'ger*, flee to *Chriſt for Refuge*, and, be *ſaved in Him* from 'the *Wrath which is to come*.' — Theſe Things, my Friends, I know you do not well underſtand. But from that Knowledge which you have & may have thereof from the Letter of God's Word, teach the ſame unto your Children. For this is your Duty, & God may bleſs even *your* Inſtruction, to beget in your Children ſome early Concern about their Souls. And whereas from the Light of Nature, & of God's Word, in the Law of the Ten Commandments, you have ſome Knowledge of what is *Sin*, & what is *Duty*; Teach the ſame unto your Children. Encourage & excite them unto every good Thing, & reſtrain them from, & correct them for, every Evil, as it is contrary to the Law of God, & deſtructive to their Souls. Tell them, *The Wages of Sin, is Death*: Labour to impreſs it on their Minds: It may be a Means of reſtraining them from much Wickedneſs. Strictly regard their Words and Actions. Let no wicked *Words*, taking the *Lord's Name in vain*, *nor Oaths*, nor *Curſes*, proceed out of their *Mouth*, without due *Correction*. Suffer not early *Diſobedience* in your Children, to your lawful *Commands*, to go *uncorrected*. Say not, "When they are older, they will learn more Wit." Alas! Sin, is a growing Evil; and if Diſobedience to Parents in little Things, is ſuffered in t tle Children; as they grow in Years, they will grow more

more ſtubborn and rebellious. *He that ſpareth his Rod, hateth his Son:* (ſaith the *Lord* by *Solomon*) *but he that loveth him, chaſteneth him betimes*, Pro. xiii. 24. Suffer not *Lying*, *Stealing*, *Sabbath-breaking*, or any other evil Action, to be done by your *Children*, without *Reſtraint*, and *Correction* from *you*. If you do, *their Sins*, will be *yours*. And for *their Miſeries* thereby, if they live & die wicked, they will blame, & curſe *you*. Yea, God Himſelf, will not hold you *Guiltleſs*. If Parents *ſuffer* wicked Words & Actions to be ſaid & done by their Children, in their Sight & Hearing, without Reſtraint or Correction; Children will *boldly* do the ſame in their Preſence, & eſpecially when out of their Sight. It is the Fault of Parents, in not reſtraining Children from, and correcting them for, wicked Words and Things at *Home*, that there is ſo much Wickedneſs as abounds at this Day among Children in the *Streets*, when at Play with their Fellows. Oh what a Shame is it, for any that profeſs to be *Chriſtian-Parents*, to have *Children*, *little* Children, curſing & ſwearing, blaſpheming the Name of GOD, calling for Damnation upon, & curſing of *themſelves* & *others* in the publick Streets! What do ſuch Parents think they are bringing up their Children for, but for that grand Enemy, the Deſtroyer of Souls? I am perſuaded, that one great Cauſe of that Flood of Ungodlineſs, which at this Day overflows our Nation is, The *Sin of Parents*, in neglecting to *train up their Children in the Way they ſhould go*.

Be intreated then, you that are Parents, not only to reſtrain your Children as much as may be from *evil Things*; but alſo to excite them to, & encourage them in every *moral Virtue*. Early learn them to *read*; that they may be capable of Converſe with the *Word of God*. Don't ſay, "We are *poor*, & can't *afford it*." For the true Reaſon, why there are ſo many Children that cannot read, is this: Their Parents are *careleſs*, & don't *regard it*. Better far wou'd it be for Children, to wear & fare the meaner, & to work the cloſer, than to want the Reading of their *Mother-Tongue*, & the precious *Word of God*, which of his infinite Goodneſs He hath afforded us therein. In which the *Way of Life*, to depart from *Hell beneath*, is revealed; & all Directions & Conſolations, with

regard

regard to *Duty* & *Privileges*, are to be found by enquiring Souls. And if Parents were concerned as they ought, to learn their Children to read; God would make it *eaſy* to them. If a little of that Time in a Week, was improved by Parents & Children in *Work*, which is loſt by the one in vain Converſation, & by the other in Idleneſs & Play; the Produce wou'd be ſufficient for poor Parents, to teach their Children to *read*. And if Parents were duly concerned about this their Duty; they might expect from God's Bounty, a greater *Bleſſing* to attend their *Labours*.

Again, You that are Parents, when your Children can read, encourage them to read the Word of God *daily*; let no Day paſs, without your Care, that ſome Part of God's Word be read by them. — Tell them likewiſe, of the Neceſſity of *Prayer*, of Seeking to God betimes; that He would give them his *Holy Spirit*, to ſhew them their Miſery by Sin, to reveal his Son in them, to enable them to believe in him, & to love & fear God all their Days: That God may be glorify'd by them on Earth, & they at laſt glorify'd with Him in Heaven. — Further, You that are Parents, take Care, that your Children profane not the *Sabbath-Day*. Have a ſtrict Eye over them, that the Whole of that Day be ſpent by them as the *Lord's Day*. Call them early to reading the Holy Scriptures. Pray with them in your Family; & take them with you to publick Worſhip, & as much as may be, both Parts of the Day. And after Evening Service, in no wiſe ſuffer them to go to Play, in your Houſes, or in the Streets. Oh what a Shame is it, to ſee Boys and Girls, young Men and Maidens, at Play in the Streets on the Evening of the *Lord's Day!* As if the *Sabbath-Day*, which ought to be kept *holy* unto *God*, & was appointed for the Good of *Souls*, was a Day, that might in ſome Part of it be dedicated to the *Devil*, & ſpent in his Service, in *wicked Works*, which prepare *Souls* for everlaſting Deſtruction! And this great Sin, which in our Day ſo abounds in *Children*, could not be done, without the great Fault, the Connivance of their *Parents*. Let Children then, on the Lord's Day, after publick Worſhip is over, be call'd upon by their Parents, to give them ſome Account of the Word of God which they have been hearing. And let them frequently be told, that they ought

to give Attention, when they go to hear the Word of God preached, that they may remember what is ſaid, & tell their Parents when they come Home. And let Parents alſo, attending to what they hear, remember, & inform their Children of what they have ſlipt. And after this, call them to ſpend the Evening in reading of the Holy Scriptures: And then conclude the Day with them in Prayer and Praiſe to God. And was this done, the Streets would be *clear* of wicked Children playing therein on a *Lord's Day*, which is now ſadly to be *ſeen*. And by the Bleſſing of God on the Parents Endeavours thus to bring up their Children in the *Nurture & Admonition of the Lord*, their Minds would be framed to *Virtue* in their early Years; which for Want hereof, are ſadly drawn off to *Vice*. And if Parents deſire the *Bleſſing of God* to attend the Education of their Children, let them *ſeek it*. When they begin to train up a *Child*, let them begin with *God*, & pray that He would give them *Wiſdom*, to inſtruct, command, and correct their Children, & that his *Bleſſing* may be upon all, for their *Benefit*.

One Thing more, let Parents obſerve, That if they would reſtrain their Children from Vice, & bring them up to Virtue, they muſt ſet no *evil Example* before their Eyes, nor be negligent themſelves, about any *good Thing* which they would commend to their Children. For *Examples* teach more than *Precepts*. If *Parents* lie & ſteal, take the Lord's Name in vain, curſe & ſwear, prophane the Sabbath, neglect the Reading & Hearing of God's Word, & Prayer to him; in vain it will be to warn their *Children* of theſe Vices, & to exhort them to the contrary Virtues. For what they *ſay*, will be *gainſaid* by what they *do*. Their Childten will not mind their *Words*; yea, their own *Mouths*, under Guilt, will be *ſtopped* from telling them what is *right*. Lamentable it is, that many Parents, in their common Diſcourſe, take the *Lord's Name in vain*, without any Senſe of doing *Evil* therein. But be aſſured, that no Perſon can take the *Name of* GOD into his Mouth, needleſsly & careleſsly, without a due *Reverence* of his glorious *Being*, but he *taketh his Name in vain*; and the *Lord* will not hold him *Guiltleſs*. No, tho' a Perſon do but ſay, which ſome think are good Words, *God bleſs me*!

Or,

Lord bleſs me! &c. Yet if theſe Words are ſpoken in a light Manner, & upon every trifling Occaſion, without the Heart's being lifted up to *God* therein, with a holy *Awe* of his great *Majeſty*, & a due *Senſe* of the Greatneſs of the *Favour* which they ſeem to call for; the uttering of theſe *good Words*, are a *great Evil*, and no other than *taking the Name of God in vain.* And oh how ſaid is it, that there are any *Parents*, who blaſpheme the Name of God by prophane *Curſing and Swearing* in the Preſence of their *Children!* Oh ſad Example, to a riſing Race! Again, Beware of calling your Children by any evil Names; as *Dogs*, &c. For a ſad Example will this ſet before them, & a bad Influence will this have upon them, to excite them to do likewiſe. What, call your Children *Dogs!* &c. What can you expect from ſuch provoking Language, but that the Sin of your Childrens Hearts, ſhould be ſtirred up by your evil Words, to *ſnarle* at you, like Dogs? To *bite* & *rend* you in your Names & Comforts, like angry *Maſtiffs?* No Doubt, much of that Perverſeneſs in Children, which is ſo afflicting to Parents, is ſuffered as a Chaſtiſement from God, for the Sin of their provoking Language to them. As Children ought not to *diſobey* their Parents, ſo nor ought Parents to *provoke their Children to Wrath*, but to bring them up in the *Nurture & Admonition of the Lord.* — And when they *chaſtiſe them for Faults*, they ſhould do it with *Judgment*, & aſk the Lord's *Bleſſing* upon their Correction; & not do it in wrathful *Anger*, & above *Meaſure*, to ſatisfy their own Paſſion. For ſuch Correction is not pleaſing to *God*, nor like to be profitable to their *Children.* In ſuch Correction, perhaps the Parent's *Sin*, is as diſpleaſing to God, as the Child's *Fault.* And what if God, in ſevere Chaſtiſement to ſuch wrathful Parents, that call their Children *Dogs*, &c. ſhould ſuffer them to ſpeak no more with a *human Voice*, but to make *Noiſes* like thoſe *Brutes*, or vile *Creatures*, which they call them by? That this is not ſeen, as a Rebuke for their Sin, is owing to the infinite Goodneſs & Patience of God. — Let Parents alſo beware of wiſhing in Anger any *bad Wiſhes* concerning their Children; as, That they were *Dead*, &c. For beſides the evil Example, that this ſets

before their Children, God often ſays *Amen*, to a *Parent's Wiſh*.

I have read of a Woman, who wiſhed in Anger, "That the *Devil* might *take her Daughter*:" And God ſuffered *Satan* inſtantly to *take Poſſeſſion of her*. Which was a ſore Rebuke, for the Sin of her wicked Wiſh. And alſo of an angry Man, who being diſpleaſed by his Son, wiſhed, "That he might never ſtir *alive*, from the *Place* where he *ſtood*:" And ſo it *was*; For he moved no more from the Place where he ſtood, but continued for ſome Time, leaning on a Deſk while he ſlept, eating little, & very rarely ſpeaking: And thus was made a living Monument of his Father's Sin, as well as of his own. Tho' when he ſpake, upon being aſked how he did: he expreſt his *Senſe* of God's preſent Chaſtiſement for his *Fault*, & alſo his *Hope* of *eternal Mercy*, that he ſhould *not be condemned with the World*: And thus he continued in the Place where he ſtood, until he died. And it is ſaid, "That the Print of his Feet remained in the Pavement where he ſtood, after he was dead."

Let every one then, beware of wiſhing any *evil Thing*, either to *themſelves*, or *others*. For God often takes Perſons at their *Word*, & in righteous Wrath, ſets his *Amen*, to their provoking *Sin*.

And let *Parents* in particular, beware of wiſhing any *bad Thing*, either to *Themſelves*, or *Children*, leſt it *come upon them*, & if *not*, as they will thereby ſet before them a *ſad Example* of *preſumputous Sin*.—And further, If Parents prophane the *Lord's-Day*, by idle and vain *Talk*, by doing worldly *Buſineſs*, any *Work* that may & ought to be done in the *Six Days*, by neglecting to read the *Word of God* in *Private*, & to hear it in *Publick*; ſuch *Parents*, practically teach their *Children Ungodlineſs*, inſtead of teaching them the *Fear of God*. Oh what a *ſad Account* will many Parents have to give, of their miſpent *Sabbaths!* Of their indulging the Fleſh, in lying at Home on a *Lord's Day*, in their own Houſes, walking the Fields, or frequenting Alehouſes; inſtead of reading the Word of God, and hearing it preached, when it is in the *Towns*, and almoſt at the *Doors* where they live! And this, not only as it tends to the Ruin of their *own Souls*, but alſo of their *Childrens!*—

And

And if to these Evils, Parents add the *Neglect of Prayer*, of Prayer with, & for their Children, of *Family-Prayer*; this is another Part of *Ungodliness*, by which they set an evil Example before their Children. There are no Families, but are dependent upon GOD daily, for Family-Mercies, & receive the same from his bountiful Hand continually. And therefore GOD ought to be acknowledged daily, to be sought, for desired Blessings, & praised, for his bestowed Favours, by the Heads of Families, the Master, or Mistress of every Family, in the Presence of their Children & Servants. And where this is *done*, GOD is *acknowledged* to be their Creator, Governor & kind Benefactor; and where Family-Prayer is *neglected*, God as the God of that Family, is so far *rejected*. His Commandments are disobeyed, his Authority despised, & his Greatness & Goodness are slighted. And such *Families* may expect *Curses* instead of *Blessings* to come down upon them, either internally, or externally, upon their *Souls*, or *Bodies*, or both. Such as Giving them up to the increasing Power of Sin & Satan, unto greater Blindness of Mind & Hardness of Heart, which are sore *Judgments* upon the Soul: Or, Poverty and Affliction upon their Bodies, with *Vexation*, *Murmuring* & *Discontent* under the same. Or, if such Families have a Fulness of outward good Things bestow'd on them; yet may they expect that God should even *curse their Blessings*, & suffer that which should have been for their *Welfare*, to become a *Trap*; to be a Means of their becoming more *wicked*, & of the Number that *forget God*.—Be intreated then, you that are *Parents*, that would train up your *Children in the Way they should go*, to set *no evil Example* before their Eyes; & to go before them in every *good Thing*, that you would commend unto, & enforce upon *them*. For much will this tend to the Good of your *own Souls*, & the Souls of your *Children*. Much Sin, & your farther Estrangement from God, will be thereby prevented; & the Blessings of his common Goodness in temporal Favours, to crown your moral Virtues, may be expected. And if you thus *think on your Ways*, & turn your *Feet unto* God's *Testimonies*, He may *bless you indeed*, with spiritual & eternal Blessings. If you thus *draw nigh to God*, He may draw *nigh to you*,

& bleſs you & yours with his *Holy Spirit*, to *open your Eyes*, to turn you from *Darkneſs to Light*, & from the *Power of Satan unto God*; *that you may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins, & Inheritance among them which are ſanctify'd by Faith that is in Chriſt.* — But

Secondly. To you that are *Converted*, Religious Parents, a Word of Advice I would humbly offer, concerning the Education of your Children in the Fear of God. And methinks this to *you*, ſhould be as it were *needleſs*; that, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in another Caſe, you *yourſelves*, as to the Performance of this Duty, are *taught of God*. I am ſure, *you* have far greater Advantages for the Education of your Children, than thoſe have, who are *unconverted*. *You* have been *convinced* of the Worth of your *own Souls* & know much of the Value of *theirs*: That *one Soul*, is more worth than the *whole World!* *You* have been *convinced* of your Guilt, & gron'd under your Miſery, as *Sinners* in your firſt Father *Adam*; as conceiv'd in Sin, & born into the World Sinners. As Tranſgreſſors of God's *Law*, in Heart & Life, & Deſpiſers of his *Goſpel*. *You* have *ſeen* the woful *Diſtance* which Sin hath ſet you at from *God*; the *Miſery* of being *without* him in the *World*; your *Heart-Enmity* againſt him, and utter *Inability* for a ſaving Turn unto him. *You* have *ſeen* your Danger of the *Wrath to come*, as *Unbelievers*. And *you* have been *bleſt* with an internal Revelation of the Glory of *Chriſt*, as the only *Saviour*; with a Heart-raviſhing Sight of his Ability, Fulneſs, & Fitneſs to *ſave*, of his Suitableneſs to your *Caſe* as loſt *Sinners*; & of his Willingneſs, & Faithfulneſs to his Promiſe, to ſave all that *come unto him*. And *you*, under the ſweet & efficacious *Drawings of the Father*, have been enabled to *come to Chriſt*, to believe in him, to the *Salvation of your Souls*. *You* have *taſted* & *ſeen*, how *good the* LORD *is!* And have had bleſt Experience of the ineffable Sweetneſs, and tranſcendent Excellency of a *Life of Communion* with *God in Chriſt*. *You* have found *Wiſdom's Ways* to be *Pleaſantneſs*, & all her *Paths* to be *Peace*. And by your *ſpiritual Life* begun & increaſed, under the quickning, ſanctifying & comforting Influences of the *Holy Ghoſt*, unto Faith in God, and Love to him, and Walking with him in the Way of his Commandments; *you* have been

bleſt with a ſweet *Foretaſte*, a delightful *Proſpect*, & a ſure *Earneſt*, of that *Bliſs* & *Glory* which awaits you in *Life Eternal*. And from thence are enabled to ſay, concerning *yourſelves*, & all thoſe who have *paſſed from Death to Life*, who have *believed in Chriſt*, & *ſhall not come into Condemnation*, as *Moſes* of God's People of Old, *Happy art thou, O* Iſrael: *Who is like unto thee, O People ſaved by the* LORD! — And will you not *teach theſe Things to your Children?* Will you not teach them the ſame *doctrinally?* I know it is the Lord alone that muſt teach them *efficaciouſly*: But he can, & frequently doth do this *inſtrumentally*. And the *Words*, the *Commandments*, which the Lord hath given to his *People*, he commands them to teach the ſame unto their *Children diligently*. As Deut. vi. 7. *And thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, & ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine Houſe, & when thou walkeſt by the Way, & when thou lieſt down, & when thou riſeſt up*. And were *Parents* more diligent in the Performance of this their Duty, they might expect thro' the Lord's Bleſſing upon their Endeavours, that their *Children* ſhould be *taught of God*. For moſt certainly, their *Labour* in this Part of the Lord's Work, is not, (ſhall not) be in *vain*. Some bleſſed Effect or other, will certainly attend it; either in the *common*, or *ſpecial* Illumination of the Spirit, in *reſtraining*, or *converting* Grace, which ſhall be given to their *Children*. And where the latter is *deny'd*, & the former *only* beſtow'd; yet even *that* is to be eſteem'd a great Privilege, while the *other*, as far ſuperior, is moſt earneſtly ſought for. O my dear Brethren & Siſters, you who are *living Parents*, who are *alive to God*, can you look on your *Children* that are *dead in Sin*, without *Concern?* Can you neglect their *Souls*, without *Remorſe?* Can you *ſee* the Traps & Snares that are laid for their Taking, the Temptations & Sins which they are like to fall into, & the dreadful Pit of endleſs Miſery & Death, which awaits the Unbelieving & Impenitent, without *warning them* of their *Danger?* — O be perſuaded to *warn* them *to flee from the Wrath to come*, earneſtly & frequently. Tell them of their Miſeries by Sin, of the Mercies of God in *Chriſt*, & exhort them to ſeek the Lord, & to ſeek him early. Read the Word of God to them, Morning & Evening, open the

ſame

ſame to them as the Lord enables you; & begin & cloſe the Day with God, in their Preſence, by Family Prayer. And let this be your *every Day's Practice*, as well as on *Lord's Days*. Early teach your Children to *read the Word of God*; and call them frequently to *that Exerciſe*. Tell them the Neceſſity of ſecret *Prayer*; and inſtruct them what they ought to pray *for*.—Good it is alſo for Parents, to teach their Children the *Principles of Religion*, as publiſhed in the *Aſſembly's Catechiſm*; and that they encourage them to treaſure up the Word of God in their *Memory*, by getting ſome *Part* thereof weekly, by Heart; & ſee that they *keep* what they have gotten, by calling upon them frequently to *repeat it*. For theſe Things will be of good Uſe, as a Means to reſtrain them from Vice, even while they remain *unconverted*; & of ſpecial Advantage to their Souls, when the Lord is pleaſed to reach them by *converting Grace*. Perſons that are well *principl'd* in the *Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs*, are not ſo apt to give into wild, erroneous *Notions*, nor at ſuch a Loſs to aſſert & defend the *Truths of God*, as thoſe who han't been favour'd with a Doctrinal *Knowledge* thereof. And great is the Privilege of a Perſon who is well *grounded* in the *Principles of Religion*, & hath the Word of God *treaſured up* in his *Memory*, in that he may *meditate* thereon, & *converſe* therewith, even when in his worldly Employments: Which greatly tends to beget & increaſe *Spirituality in the Minds*, & to excite, & maintain a *cloſe Walk with God*.—Again, take your Children with you unto *publick Worſhip*; & while they're under Age, & incapable of judging for themſelves, lay your *Commands* upon them to attend with you, upon the Word & Ordinances of God, where you judge they are moſt *purely* & *powerfully diſpenſed*. Tell them of the Neceſſity of *regarding* what they hear; enquire what they *remember*; inform them of what they have *ſlipt*, & open to them what they don't *underſtand*. And begin & cloſe the *Lord's Day*, with Prayer & Praiſe to *Him*, in the Preſence of your *Children*. In no wiſe ſuffer them to *play*, at Home or abroad on the *Lord's Day*; nor to aſſociate themſelves with *wicked Children*, on *other Days*. Watch over their Words & Actions, & let no evil Words be *ſpoken*, nor evil Things be *done* by them, without *Reproof*

and *Correction*. Suffer them not to *disobey* your Commands, in Things small or great. If you wink at their Disobedience in *little Matters*, they'll soon be hardned, & regardless of your Commands in Things of *greater Moment*. In a Word, my dear Friends, walk before your Children, as *Examples of all Goodness*; as such that are taught by the *Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*, to *deny Ungodliness & worldly Lusts, & to live Soberly, Righteously, & Godly in this present World*. That so you may *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things*; commend the Ways of God to your Children, & excite them by your Example to walk therein: That they with you, & after you, may be a *Seed* to serve the LORD, that shall be accounted unto Him for a *Generation* in *this World*, & saved in & by him with an everlasting *Salvation* in the *World to come*. For if you thus train up your Children in the Way they should *go*, when *young*; you may expect thro' Divine Blessing, that when they are *old*, they will not *depart from it*.

And surely, my dear Friends, it is needless to intreat *you*, to begin with GOD, when you begin to educate your *Children*, & to go on with *Him*, in every *Step* of their Education; by *Prayer* to him, for his *Blessing* upon you & them, & upon all your Instructions, Admonitions, Commands, & Corrections given them. For you well know, that of *yourselves*, you are not sufficient to teach & rule your Children in his Fear; & that none of all your Labour of Love which you shew towards the Lord's Name, & in Kindness to your dear Children, in your Endeavours to train them up in the Way that they should go, can prosper, & be for their Souls Advantage, without the *Divine Blessing* thereon. And one wou'd think it should be natural, *spiritually natural*, to your new Nature, I am sure it is, to teach & govern your Children according to *God's Commands*. — But alas! as you have much *Sin* remaining in you, & are exposed to many *Snares* & *Temptations*, you are liable to be turned *aside* out of the Path of your Duty, & to *neglect* that due Watch & Care over your Children, & the *Exercise* of that Authority, which the Lord hath given you, & requires you should use for Him, upon them, for his Glory, & for your & their Advantage. And so far

as you are ſenſible of your Neglect of Duty herein, confeſs & bewail it before the Lord, flee by Faith afreſh for Cleanſing to the *Blood of Jeſus*, that *Fountain ſet open for Sin & for Uncleanneſs*; aſk for the freſh Applications of pardoning Grace to your Hearts, & ſet about this Work again, which the Lord calls you to, in his Fear.—And beware of yielding to that Temptation of Satan, which he caſts into your Minds, & of indulging that ſpiritual Lazineſs which is apt to prevail in your Souls, which prompt you to neglect the Religious Education of your Children, by ſuggeſting to your Thoughts, 'That if your 'Children are within the Line of *Election*, they ſhall be '*called*; that the *Lord* will teach them his *Truths*, in his 'own *Time*, reclaim them from the *Ways of Sin*, & lead 'them in the *Ways of Holineſs*: And therefore *you* need 'not be much concerned about inſtructing & guiding them 'in the Ways of God, & reſtraining them from the Ways 'of Sin *yourſelves*.' For tho' the former Part of this Suggeſtion is a great *Truth*, it is greatly miſapply'd in the latter Part of it, and you greatly *err*, when you take Encouragement from *thence*, to neglect your *Duty*. For Duty & Privilege, which God hath *joïned together*, ought not to be *put aſunder*. It was the Privilege of *Abraham*, that God had engaged, by his great unchanging Promiſe, To *make of* Him a *great Nation*, Gen. xii. 2. And by his inviolable Covenant, *To be a God unto* Him, *and to* his *Seed after* him, Chap. xvii. 7. But this did not *exclude*, but *include*, & enforce *Abraham*'s Duty, Of *Training up his Children in the Fear of God*. And when the Lord would deal with him as his ſpecial Favourite, by revealing to him the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, & admitting *Abraham* to the moſt familiar Interceſſion with Him, that He would not *deſtroy the Righteous with the Wicked*, but *ſpare the Place*, if He ſhould find there, from *Fifty Righteous*, even down to *Ten*, until *Abraham* ſaid, He would *ſpeak no more*: The Lord takes a particular Notice of the Obedience of his Servant, to God's Command, in the Government of his Family; according to which he would confer this Honour upon him. *And the* LORD *ſaid, ſhall I hide from* Abraham *that Thing which I do; ſeeing that* Abraham *ſhall ſurely become a great & mighty Nation, and all the Nations*

Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed in him? For I know him, that he will command his Children & his Houſhold after him, & they ſhall keep the Way of the LORD, *to do Juſtice & Judgment; that the* LORD *may bring upon* Abraham *that which he hath ſpoken of him*, Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19. Here the Lord ſets as it were a Mark of Favour, & Honour upon *Abraham*, ſhews his Approbation, & gives a Commendation of the Conduct of this his Servant, in the *Government of his Family*, & brings forth the *Father of the Faithful*, in this Part of his *Obedience*, as a *Pattern* to his *Children*, to thoſe that are of *Faith*, that are true *Believers*, even to the World's End. *For I know him:* Which is as if the Lord ſhould ſay, 'I know the 'Spirit of that my Servant, that at my Command he will 'follow ME fully; I know his Faith, Love & Faithfulneſs.' *That he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him:* In this the Lord *glories* as it were in his *Obedience*, in his teaching his Ways unto his *Children* & *Servants*, in his walking therein before them, as a *Pattern* unto them, & in his exerciſing that *Authority*, that commanding *Power* which the Lord had given him, to enforce *them alſo to follow him. And they ſhall keep the Way of the* LORD, *to do Juſtice & Judgment.* Which denotes the bleſſed *Effect*, of *Abraham*'s Performance of his Duty, in the Government of his Family; or that happy *Influence* which, thro' the Divine Bleſſing, his Example & Command ſhould have upon his Family. *That the* LORD *may bring upon* Abraham *that which He hath ſpoken of him.* And this laſt Clauſe of the Verſe, clearly ſhews, that *Connexion* which there was between *Abraham*'s Duty, & his Privilege, between *his teaching & commanding* his Children to walk in the Ways of the Lord; & *their walking* therein, after his Example, by his Inſtruction, & at his Command: Unto that great & wondrous *Bleſſing*, which the Lord by his unchanging Promiſe & ſure Covenant, had engaged to bring upon Him & His, in making of Him a *great Nation*, & in being a GOD unto Him, & to his *Seed* after him.

Say not then, my dear Friends, no, not in your *Heart*, much leſs let ſuch a Thing proceed out of your *Mouth*, "That if you are to be bleſſed with Godly Children, with

a *Seed to ſerve* the LORD; that ſhall be accounted to him for a *Generation*; you need not *inſtruct* & *enforce them*, to walk in his Ways *yourſelves*." But be diligent in the Performance of this your Duty, if you deſire and hope for the *Privilege*, of the Converſation & Salvation of *your* Children, of *your God's* being the *God of your Seed*. *Abraham* was ſurely to become a *great Nation*; & yet he was to *command his Children & his Houſhold after him*, & they to *keep the Way of the Lord*; *that the Lord might bring upon* Abraham *that which he had ſpoken of him*. *Abraham*'s Privilege was to flow down upon him, his Bleſſing to be conveyed to him, thro' the Channel of his Duty; and ſo muſt *yours*. And think it not enough to *teach* your Children the *Things of God*, to inſtruct them in his Ways, & to go before them therein, but lay alſo your *Commands* upon them, to *keep the Way of the Lord*, with you. For on this Account, the Lord commanded his Servant *Abraham*, and he requires of *you*, that you ſhould exerciſe that *commanding Power* over them, to cauſe them to walk in the *Ways of God*, which *he* hath given you.—And if you neglect this your Duty, & reſtrain not your Children from evil Ways; the Lord, your Father, will be much diſpleaſed with you, & bring upon you his ſevere Rebukes. As the Lord was much diſpleaſed with *Eli*, and brought great Evil upon his *Houſe*, becauſe his *Sons made themſelves vile*, & He *reſtrained them not*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. *Eli* told his Sons of their evil Ways, & argu'd with them to leave the ſame. As Chap. ii. 23, *&c.* But becauſe he did not exerciſe that *Authority*, that *Power* over them, which was given him, in *reſtraining* them from their Wickedneſs, even after the Lord had teſtify'd his great Diſpleaſure on that Account; He was *angry* with him, & *deſtroy'd his Houſe*.—Be perſuaded then, my dear Friends, if you would honour your *heavenly Father*, if you would walk before him as his *dear Children*, *unto all Pleaſing*, if you would have his *Bleſſings*, his New Covenant *Mercies*, deſcend upon *you* & *yours*, to engage earneſtly in this your *Duty*, of *Training up your Children in the Fear of God*. That your Houſes may be *Beth-els*, Houſes of GOD, where the LORD dwells, & is *worſhiped*: That your *Children* with

you

you may be *Trees of Righteouſneſs, the Planting of the* LORD *that He may be glorify'd*, in the Church, the *Garden of God* below: And that you may together ſtand as *Plants of Renown*, in all ineffable Bliſs of the Church, the *Paradiſe of God*, above; to the *Praiſe of the Glory* of his *free Grace in Chriſt*, unto *Ages without End!*—But perhaps ſome Parents, Fathers, or Mothers, Heads of Families, may ſay,

Objec. Alas! my Knowledge of the Things of God is but *ſmall*; my Children will not *regard* what I ſay; & my Gift of Prayer is ſo *weak & mean*, that I cannot perform *Family-Duty*. If I had greater Gifts, to inſtruct & govern my Children, & for Family-Prayer, I think I could *engage therein*; but as I have *not*, I hope the Lord will not be diſpleaſed with *me*, if I am not ſo diligent in teaching & ruling my Children, & in praying with them, as *others* are, that are more *fitted* for theſe Things.

Anſ. Oh my Friends, let none of you ſpeak thus. Be not diſcouraged at your *own* Inſufficiency; the *Lord is* All-ſufficient. *All Fulneſs* dwells in *Chriſt*, on purpoſe to ſupply *you*, in all your *Emptineſs*. And as the Lord *requires* theſe Things at your Hands, aſking Aſſiſtance of him, *attempt* your Duty, tho' in the utmoſt *Weakneſs*; & the *Power of Chriſt* ſhall reſt upon you, for the Performance thereof. And your heavenly Father, whoſe Compaſſions are boundleſs, will *pity & pardon* you, in all the Weakneſs & Imperfections which attend your Duty; & in infinite Grace, will he *accept & reward* your poor weak Performances, every way like his great, his glorious SELF. He will look on you in your lamented Weakneſs, with the Eye of his tender Mercy, & in your willing Obedience, with the Eye of his gracious Complacency; He will account Himſelf honoured by you in this your Labour of Love, & will honour you therein, both here & hereafter. He will honour you *here*, as his obedient Children, with the Preſence of his Grace, in the Way of your Duty, with his Bleſſing upon the Performance thereof, & with increaſing Gifts for his Service, while you engage therein; & *hereafter*, with a Crown of Righteouſneſs that fadeth not away, according to every Word & Action, you have ſpoke

ſpoke or done for God, at his Command in this preſent World. Whereas, if you neglect your Duty, as you will thereby *diſhonour* & *diſpleaſe* the Lord, your Father, & bring his Chaſtiſements upon you in this World: So thereby alſo, you will *loſe* that *Praiſe*, & *Honour*, & *Glory*, which all thoſe that walk in the Obedience of Faith & Love, ſhall receive at the *Appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*.—Once more, Would you have your Families, you that *fear God*, look like the Families of the *Ungodly*? Would you ſtand expoſed to that dreadful Imprecation, *Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen that know Thee not, & upon the Families that call not upon thy Name!* Jer. x. 15. The *Heathen*, that know not GOD, & thoſe that *call not on his Name*, as *Families*, are joined together; & his *Fury* imprecated to come down upon them.—To you then that *know the Lord*, let me ſay, yea, let me intreat you, As *Families to call upon the Lord's Name*. You that are Fathers & Mothers, Heads of Families, with your Children & Servants, ſay, while you ſee ungodly Families round about you, as *Joſhua* did, *And if it ſeems evil unto you to ſerve the* LORD, *chooſe you this Day whom you will ſerve, whether the gods that your Fathers ſerved, that were on the other Side of the Flood, or the gods of the* Amorites *in whoſe Land you dwell; but as for* Me & my Houſe, *we will ſerve the* LORD. Joſ. xxiv. 15. And now, That you who are *Parents*, that read or hear theſe Lines, & the poor imperfect Hints I have given, may be inclined & enabled to walk in this ſweet Path of *Duty*, in the *Religious Education of your Children*; to the Glory of *God* in & by you, & to *your* & *their* exceeding great *Privilege* in & by *Him*, both preſent & eternal: *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your Spirit!* So prays,

My Dear Friends,

Your Affectionate Friend & unworthy

Servant in the LORD, &c.

LET-

LETTER II. To *Children*: To excite them to *remember* their *Creator in the Days of* their *Youth*.

My Dear little Children,

YOUR Friend that loves you, would ſtir up your Minds to *remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth*. And let me ſay,

Firſt. Unto *you* that are *unconverted*; *Remember*, that GOD was your *Creator*. That He made *Man Upright*, Eccleſ. vii. 29. The *firſt* Man, *Adam*, & *all Men* in *him*, their common Head & Repreſentative, were thus made. *God created Man in his own Image*, Gen. i. 27. In Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, & Holineſs. He formed Man of the *Duſt of the Ground*, as to his Body, & breathed into his Noſtrils the *Breath of Life*; & Man became a *living Soul*, Ch. ii. 7. Man was the moſt noble Creature of all God's lower Creation, of all the Creatures which He formed in this World. He was made but a little lower than the Angels, thoſe glorious Inhabitants of the upper World, who in Heaven do always behold the Face of GOD, Pſ. viii. 5. Mat. xviii. 10. Man, in the State wherein he was created, had a Perfection of Life given him, as to his *Body*, without the leaſt Subjection to any Kind or Degree of Death, to any Maladies, or Miſeries, or End of his Natural Life, had he kept his firſt Eſtate. And as to his *Soul*, that was an immortal Spirit, fill'd with a Perfection of Life, according to its ſpiritual Nature: Of Likeneſs to God, both in its Eſſence & Qualities. As to its Eſſence, or Nature, it was a *Spirit*, as *God is a Spirit*; & *ſpiritual* it was in its *Qualities*, like God in *Knowledge*, *Righteouſneſs* & *Holineſs*. And in both Reſpects, bearing in its Creature-Meaſure, the *Image* of its Creator, it was fitted for *Converſe* with him. To know, love, & ſerve GOD, as its chief *Good*, & ultimate *End*. And in the Soul's perfect Likeneſs to God, its Fitneſs to ſerve & enjoy him, & in its actual Dedication to him, & Enjoyment of him, its Happineſs, Life and Glory conſiſted. Man, as he came out of his Maker's Hand, was *very Good*.

In

In all the Powers of his Soul, & Members of his Body, he was perfectly holy to God, and happy in Him. God & Man, walked together in familiar Converſe, in ſweet Friendſhip: To the Glory of the Creator, & the Bliſs of the Creature.

But lo, my dear Children, that *old Serpent*, who is the *Devil & Satan*, who was once an Angel of Light, being by his Sin againſt God, a fallen Spirit, from the Heights of his Creation-Glory, into the Depths of endleſs Miſery; He envy'd God the Honour, & Man the Happineſs, of his bliſsful State in the Garden of *Eden*. And thence, He tempted our firſt Parents to *eat* of the *forbidden Fruit*, of that *Tree* whereof the Lord commanded them, that they ſhould *not* eat; & concerning which He ſolemnly pronounced, "That in the Day they eat thereof, they ſhould ſurely die." They hearkned to the Temptation, the Woman being firſt in the Tranſgreſſion, took of the forbidden Fruit, & did eat, & gave it to her Huſband with her, & He did eat. And the Eyes of them both were *opened*, & they knew that they were *naked*, Gen. iii. 1, &c. Thus by their Sin againſt God, in breaking the Law of their Creator, they fell from that State of perfect Happineſs in which they were created, into a State of Wretchedneſs & unſpeakable Miſery. As ſoon as ever they had broken the Law of God, its righteous Curſe took Hold of them. *In dying* they *died*. Death in the Sentence inſtantly ſeized them. Death ſpiritual, temporal, & eternal. They dy'd immediately in their *Souls*, they loſt the *Divine Image*, that Knowledge of God, that Holineſs from him and to him, & that bleſt Enjoyment of him, in & for which they were *created*, which was the *moral Life* of their Spirits. And contracted the *Image of Satan*, a Fulneſs of all *Sin*, took Poſſeſſion of their Hearts, of all the Powers of their Souls, & ſpread its deadly Influence thro' all the Members of their Bodies. They became alienated from the *Life of God*, & *dead in Sins*. They knew that they were *naked*. They ſaw themſelves to be ſtript of their Creation-Life & Glory, in the bliſsful Favour of God, & that they ſtood expoſed to Death & Miſery, under his righteous Wrath. Whence, being under the Guilt, Filth & Power of Sin, & the Curſe

Curſe of a broken Law, they fled from God, as their Enemy, & ſought in vain to hide themſelves from his omniſcient Eyes. And ſo adding Sin to Sin, went farther off from all Good, into all Evil.—Oh *ſad State!* Poor Man, was quite undone! The firſt Man ſinned, & all Men, being in Him as their Covenant-Head, ſinned in Him, and fell with Him in his firſt Tranſgreſſion. As ſays the Apoſtle, *By one Man* (Adam) *Sin entered into the World, & Death by Sin; & ſo Death paſſed upon all Men,* in Him, *for that all* (in Him) *have ſinned,* Rom. v. 12. Hence it is, that we are all *ſhapen in Iniquity, & conceived in Sin,* Pſ. li. 5. And born into this World, *Sinners. Alienated from the Life of God; Dead in Sins;* And are *Eſtranged from the Womb, & go aſtray, ſpeaking Lies;* Are under the *Power of Satan;* & the *Curſe of the Law;* Have deſerved to *die,* naturally, ſpiritually & eternally. To endure all Miſeries in this Life, Death itſelf, & the Pains of Hell for ever; & are in manifeſt Danger of *the Wrath which is to come.* As appears by theſe Scriptures, Eph. iv. 18. Ch. ii. 1, *&c.* Pſ. lviii. 3. Act. xxvi. 18. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. vi. 23. Mat. iii. 7. And ſo, in this ſad State, we have no Power to help ourſelves, We are *without Strength,* Rom. v. 6.

But Oh, my dear Children, God, who is rich in Mercy, did not ſuffer all Mankind to periſh in this State of Sin & Miſery. But from his great Love to a Remnant of the Children of Men, whom He choſe in Chriſt before the Foundation of the World, He appointed them to obtain Salvation, & eternal Glory in & thro' him. And for this bleſſed End, He gave his Son in the Fulneſs of Time. *For God ſo loved the World, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in Him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life,* John iii. 16.

The *Love of God,* was the Fountain-cauſe of the Gift of his Son, of his only-begotten Son, that unſpeakable Gift! We had ſinned, & deſerved his eternal Wrath: But Oh! ſo great, ſo rich, ſo free, was God's eternal Love, that he look'd down from the Heights of his Holineſs & Glory, upon us provoking Sinners, in the Depths of our Miſery, with an Eye of tender Mercy, of infinite Mercy; & thence reſolved to be gracious to us, without any foreſeen Good-

neſs in us, to move him to ſave us, & notwithſtanding all our foreſeen Vileneſs, for which he might juſtly have deſtroyed us. He reſolved to be *gracious* unto whom he *would* be gracious, & to *ſhew Mercy* on whom he *would* ſhew Mercy. And thence he called a Council in Himſelf, How all his Perfections might be *glorified*, & yet we, miſerable Sinners *ſaved*. And when in his infinite Wiſdom he ſaw, that no Creature nor Thing in Heaven nor Earth, nor all their Hoſts united, could ſave us, when there was but *one Way* left, in which we could poſſibly eſcape that eternal Damnation of Hell, which we had deſerved, & enjoy that everlaſting Salvation in Heaven, which he had deſigned: So great was his Love, that he reſolved to ſave us in *that Way*; even by the Gift of his *own Son*, which was the higheſt Commendation of infinite *Love*. For God *ſo* loved the World, ſo inexpreſſibly, ſo inconceivably, that he *gave his only-begotten Son*.

He gave his only-begotten Son, who was the Second Divine Perſon, in the ever-bleſſed Trinity, & God equal with the Father; to *take upon him our Nature*, to take our human Nature, into an inſeparable Union with his Divine Perſon, to be God-Man, in two diſtinct Natures, & yet but one Perſon forever, that he might be a fit Mediator between God and Sinners. God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, in the Nature of Man, in the ſame Nature that ſinned, to be made *under the Law*, to obey that righteous Law, which required of us perfect Obedience; & to endure its Curſe, which for our Sins we had juſtly deſerved. God the Father gave his Son, to *obey* & *die* in our Room, to give a full Satisfaction to Divine Juſtice for our Sins, & to work out a perfect Righteouſneſs to clothe our Naked Souls; that by his complete Redemption, we might enjoy a full & everlaſting Salvation. God the Father gave his Son, not only to die for us, but alſo to *riſe again* for us, to aſcend into *Heaven*, & to ſit upon his own *Throne* for us, in the virtue of his meritorious Death, to ſave us by his Life, to raiſe us from the Depths of Miſery, to the Heights of Glory, to live & reign with Him, in Life eternal. God *ſo* loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to be a *complete Saviour* to us. "It pleaſed the Father that in HIM all

Fulneſs

Fulneſs ſhould dwell." A Fulneſs of Peace & Pardon, to reconcile us to God, to forgive our guilty Souls, & to create Peace in our troubled Minds: A Fulneſs of Righteouſneſs, to juſtify us before God, & make us acceptable to him: A Fulneſs of the Holy Spirit, & of all Grace, to ſanctify us here, & to prepare us for Glory hereafter: A Fulneſs of all Life, to be communicated unto us, both ſpiritual & eternal: A Fulneſs, that anſwers all our Emptineſs, that can never be drawn dry, thro' Time, nor to Eternity!

And God *ſo* loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever *believeth in him* ſhould not *periſh*, but have *everlaſting Life*. He gave this great Saviour, to be *believed in* by the chief of Sinners, & holds forth his great Salvation, to be *received*, by *Whoſoever will*, that *whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould* not periſh, *but have* everlaſting Life: That whoſoever Looketh unto Chriſt alone, as a complete Saviour, for his own Salvation, & comes unto Him for the Whole of that great Salvation, which he hath promiſed to every poor Sinner that believeth in Jeſus; ſhould *not periſh*, by the Wrath of God eternally; but have *everlaſting Life*; the Life of Juſtification, of Sanctification, & of Conſolation, begun, & increaſing here on Earth, until compleated at the Hour of Death; & the Life of Glorification hereafter in Heaven, in the immediate Viſion, & full Enjoyment of God, unto all Eternity.

Hence then, my dear little Children, This great Saviour, & his great Salvation, is proclaimed unto *you*, by the bleſſed Goſpel, for *your Acceptance*. Young, as the youngeſt of you are, you don't know how ſoon you may *die*. And if you die *out of Chriſt*, you muſt *periſh forever*, You muſt be ſent away from God, accurſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil & his Angels. That God, that made you, will not ſave you, will not receive you to that Fulneſs of Joy, & thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure, which are at his Right Hand forevermore, if you are not found in his dear Son. For Chriſt is the only Way unto God: No Man (he himſelf ſays) cometh unto the Father, (unto God as a Father) but by me. Come then, my dear little Children, *come to Chriſt* as you *can*, & Chriſt will bring you unto *God*. Come to Chriſt daily by Prayer, Morning & Evening, & intreat him of his free Grace, to give you his *Holy*

Spirit, as the Spirit of all Grace, to work *Faith* in your Hearts, to *look* to that Jesus, who once died on the Cross, & now liveth on the Throne, to save Sinners, to *look* to this great Saviour, who is mighty to save, for your *own* Salvation; to give you Repentance unto Life, to turn you, & to enable you to turn, from *Sin & Satan*, unto God. The *Lord Jesus* will not despise your Weakness, tho' your Prayers are but like the chattering of a *Crane*, or a *Swallow*. He was once a *little Child* himself; & he well knows, how weakly *little Children* think and speak; he will not be angry that you come to his Throne, that you lift up your Eyes, & Hearts, & Hands, unto him in Heaven, but he will be pleased to see you seek him betimes. He said, even of Infants, that were brought unto him by others, "Suffer little Children to come unto ME, & forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And well it pleaseth him to see little Children come to him themselves. The loving Saviour, stands with open Arms, to receive & embrace, *all the little Children* that *come unto him*.—Be willing to learn to *read*, & to read & hear the *Word* of the blessed *Saviour*. *Timothy*, who lived to be a Minister of the glorious Gospel, well knew the *Holy Scriptures* from a *Child*: Which are able to make little Children, *wise unto Salvation, thro' Faith which is in Christ Jesus*. Search the *Scriptures* daily, & intreat the Lord to give you his *Spirit* to open your Understanding, that you may *understand* the Scriptures. For in them the Way to eternal Life, & to escape Hell beneath, is clearly shewn; & they, are they which *testify of Christ*. And a Blessing is promised upon those that read & hear the same. It is in this Way, that we poor Sinners, find the Saviour. "And whoso findeth ME, he says, findeth *Life*, & shall obtain Favour of the *Lord*." And the Favour of God, is infinitely better than the Favour of Men, than the Favour of all the Creatures in Heaven or Earth. God's *Loving-kindness, is better than Life*, natural; & *in his Favour is Life*, spiritual & eternal. In God's *Presence* there is *Fulness of Joy*, & at his *Right Hand*, there are *Pleasures forevermore*. One Drop of God's special Favour, is infinitely better than all earthly Joy, than all the Delights of this vain World. The Soul that is blest with the Enjoyment

joyment of God's gracious Preſence, & is changed into his Image, or Likeneſs, that is happy in God, & holy to him; hath a ſpiritual Bliſs, that is ſuited to the Nature of his Soul, which is an immortal Spirit; & which is the very Beginning of eternal Bliſs, of immortal Life & Glory. Hearken then, my dear little Children, unto the Voice of God in his Word, who for his Glory & your Joy, has ſaid, *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* — But

Again. Unto you, Children, who are growing up apace to be young Men & Women, unto *you*, & every one of you, the Lord ſays, *Remember* now *thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* Be intreated then, to ſeek the Lord betimes, in the Uſe of all the Means of Grace, & wait therein, for the Grace of the Means, to flow down upon you thereby. And as ſuch that *ſeek God*, endeavour to abſtain from every Thing that *offends God*, from every known *Sin*; as well as to walk in the Path of every known *Duty.*

And here I might mention particularly, *Obedience to Parents.* By the *fifth* Commandment of God's Law, Children are obliged to obey their Parents. "Honour thy Father & thy Mother: that thy Days may be long upon the Land that the LORD thy God giveth thee." This the Apoſtle ſtyles, "The firſt Commandment with Promiſe." — And to excite you to obey your Parents, conſider, That it is to *Them*, under *God*, you owe your *Being.* And think, What great Ingratitude it is, to *forget* GOD, your great Creator, who was the *Author* of your Being, & to diſobey his Command, by *diſhonouring* your *Parents*, who were the *Inſtruments* of your Being! Think likewiſe, What great Duty you owe to GOD, as your Preſerver! And to your *Parents*, for all their parental Love & Care for you! God caſt you upon their Care; HE gave them Hearts & Hands, to pity & provide for you. And Oh how much did they do for *you*, when you could do nothing for *yourſelves!* And will you diſhonour *God*, & diſobey your *Parents*, when without the great GOD, you had not *been*, to ſin againſt him? And without your Parents *Love & Care*, you had not been *alive* to diſpleaſe them? You owe to God, & to your Parents, *more Duty*, than you can *give.*

And

And will you deny to God, & Them, the utmoſt of that Obedience, you are *capable* of giving? Think what Trouble & Charge your Parents have been at, to bring you up hitherto; & how their Heads & Hearts & Hands, are engaged for you ſtill! And will you ſo evilly requite them, to diſhonour & grieve them? Think, What Comforts they hoped that you would prove to them, when grown up: And will you now diſappoint their Hope, & be Griefs, inſtead of Joys to them? And can you be ſo ungrateful, eſpecially, if you conſider, That thereby, you will both *ſin againſt God*, your great Creator, & kind Preſerver, & *wrong your own Souls!* — Beware then of *diſobeying* your Parents lawful *Commands*; for as this is very provoking to God, it will be ſeverely chaſtiſed by him. Take Heed of indulging diſhonourable Thoughts of your Parents, of ſpeaking any ſlighting, diſhonourable Words to them, & of doing any Thing, & every Thing, that will tend to grieve them. For if you think or ſpeak lightly of, or to your Parents, or diſobey their lawful Commands, as you will thereby grieve their Hearts, ſo the Lord for ſuch Carriage, will not hold you Guiltleſs. *Diſobedience to Parents*, is a Sin that is frequently puniſhed remarkably even in *this Life*. And if not repented of, its Puniſhment hereafter, will be *eternal Death*. If you diſhonour & diſobey your Parents, & thereby ſlight & grieve them, if God ſhould grant you Repentance in Mercy, the Remembrance of this Sin, will grieve you exceedingly. And if not, you will be puniſhed for it on Earth, & in Hell very ſeverely. You ſhall have *Children*, that will grieve & diſhonour *You*, or ſome Way or other, you ſhall certainly *receive*, that Grief & Diſhonour here on Earth, which you *give* to your Parents, & thereby be made to read your *Sin*, in your *Puniſhment*; beſides that dreadful Puniſhment, which is reſerved for you hereafter, in the Damnation of Hell forever. You may expect to have the Curſe, the Wrath of God, poured out upon you in this World, & to be ſent away from Chriſt accurſed, into endleſs Torment, at the great Day of Judgment.—But on the other Hand, if you *honour & obey* your *Parents*, as you will thereby pleaſe, & delight *them*, ſo the Performance of this Duty, is likewiſe pleaſing unto *God*, & ſhall be rewarded by him with temporal Bleſ-

ſings.—And if you are bleſt with *ſuch* Parents, that carefully inſtruct you for the Good of your Souls, that exhort you to *Repentance toward God, & Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; & you give Diligence, to hearken to their Inſtructions; you may humbly hope for ſpiritual Bleſſings, & *everlaſting Salvation*, that the Lord will be found of you *early*, if in this, & other of the Means of Grace, you ſeek him *diligently*.

And when you begin to ſeek for Happineſs, ſeek it not in the periſhing Things of this Life, of this vain World, where you will never find it; but ſeek it in thoſe heavenly Bleſſings which endure forever. In the Enjoyment of God, & Conformity to him, in thoſe Ways of Wiſdom, which are pointed out for you to walk in, by the Spirit of God in his Word. For, "All Wiſdom's Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, & all her Paths are Peace."

I have already given a Hint, Of the Glory of your firſt Make, in your firſt Father *Adam*, when you came out of your Creator's Hand: Of your woful Fall from God, & miſerable State by Sin: And of the wondrous Love of God, in providing a Way, whereby Backſliders from him, & Sinners againſt him, might return unto him, & be ſaved by him, thro' Faith in his Dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt. And what ſhall I now ſay unto *You?* Are you willing to be *ſaved?* or willing to be *damned?* To be ſaved in *God's Way?* Or to be damned in your *own Way?* One of them, Salvation, or Damnation, will certainly be your *Lot*. Which do you chuſe, *Life*, or *Death?* "Oh, you will ſay, *Life*, undoubtedly: Who would chuſe *Death*, eternal Death, to go down into the Pit of unutterable & endleſs Miſery?" But, Dear Souls, whoever you are that thus ſpeak, if you chuſe *Sin*, to go on in a Courſe of *Sin*, you chuſe Death in its *Cauſe*. For *Death*, is the *Wages of Sin*. And as for *Life*, *eternal Life*, it is the free *Gift of God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*. And if you are not willing *now*, to forſake your Sins, & to return unto the Lord, to receive & embrace this glorious Gift of God, Eternal Life, in & with Jeſus Chriſt our Lord: How juſt would it be with God to ſend you to Hell *inſtantly*, to appoint you to eternal Death & Miſery? Your numberleſs Sins, have innumerable Times, deſerved this at his Hands. And yet

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the Lord hath ſpared you to this very Moment; but know, that if you *go on*, to deſpiſe the Riches of his Goodneſs, & Forbearance, which loudly call, & ſhould naturally lead you to Repentance: This your great Sin, in refuſing to comply with the Call of the Goſpel, in rejecting that great Salvation in Chriſt, which the Goſpel proclaims, this Sin, added to all the reſt, will be ſuch an additional Weight to them, that will ſink you more deeply into eternal Death & Miſery, than if you had never heard of eternal Life in Chriſt, proclaimed for your Acceptance by the Goſpel thro' God's free Mercy.

If then, Chriſt knocks at the Door of your Hearts by his Voice in his Word, & by Convictions of Conſcience, & calls you to open unto HIM betimes: Don't ſay, no not in Heart, "Alas, I am too *young* to mind Religion." For the Lord calls thee to Remember *now* thy Creator; to return unto him inſtantly, is thy immediate Duty. And *To-Day*, even *To-Day*, thou art called to *hear* the Saviour's Voice, who invites thee to Seek him *early*.—"Boaſt not thyſelf of *To-morrow*; for thou knoweſt not what a *Day* may bring forth." If thou refuſeſt to come to Chriſt To-Day, thy Life may be cut off *To-morrow*. And if thou dieſt in an unrenewed, unconverted State, *Hell* will be thy Portion. Therefore, "To-Day, the Lord ſays, while it is called To-Day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Heart." Venture not then, to go on in Sin a Day longer, for Sin is of a hardening Nature; one Sin added to another, will make thy Heart ſtill harder & harder. And if thou *goeſt on* to harden thyſelf againſt the Calls of God in his Word, to return unto him by Chriſt, & will ſtill ſin againſt Checks of Conſcience; the Lord may juſtly give thee up more dreadfully to the Power of Sin & Satan, to commit Iniquity greedily; & unto ſuch an awful Degree of Hardneſs of Heart, that thou mayſt ſin without Remorſe. God may ſay of thee in his Wrath, "He is joined to Idols; let him alone:" Let him go on in the Ways of Sin, until he receive the Wages of it in eternal Death.

Again. Don't ſay in thy Heart, "If I liſten to the Voice of Chriſt *now*: I ſhall loſe all my *Pleaſure*." For that is *woful* Pleaſure, which is taken in *Sin*; in Sin, that pierceth the *Saviour*, that kills the *Soul*. All the Pleaſure that

that is taken in Sin, will end in Bitterneſs. In bitter Remorſe, unto all thoſe who have the Grace of Repentance unto Life given them in this World; or in the Bitterneſs of eternal Death, to the impenitent, under the Terrors of God's Wrath, & the Horrors of a guilty Conſcience forever, in remedileſs, unutterable & endleſs Torment.—And even in the Enjoyment of the Pleaſures of Sin, O how vile, how vain, how empty are they. For beſides the ſhort, tranſitory Nature of them, & the Vexation that attends them, they *ſtarve the Soul*, while it ſeeks to *feed* upon them. The Pleaſures of *Senſe & Sin*, are not ſuited to the Nature of an *immortal Mind*. No Soul can make a Life out of Sin: For while any one lives in *Sin*, naturally, he is dead to *God*, ſpiritually, dead in his Soul, tho' alive in his Body.—But the Pleaſures of Religion, are pure, ſolid, ſubſtantial Pleaſures, living, laſting Pleaſures, that feaſt & ſatisfy the *Soul*, in this World, & will be its everlaſting Life & Solace in that which is to come. So that, to return unto God by Chriſt *early*, is not the Way to *loſe Pleaſure*, but to *gain it*; to enjoy thoſe Pleaſures which are of a far higher, & more durable Nature, than the Pleaſures of Sin, which are vain & ſhort, & end in Death. For the Pleaſures of God's infinite Favour, which are ſpiritual & eternal, fill the Soul with Joy unſpeakable & full of Glory *here*, & with the pure River of God's Pleaſures, it ſhall be abundantly & everlaſtingly ſatisfied & delighted *hereafter*. Never did any one Soul *repent*, that turn'd its Back upon ſinful Pleaſures, to ſeek the Lord *truly & early*: But every Soul that returns unto God at all, *laments it greatly*, that it lived in Sin *ſo long*: And there is not a Soul, that taſtes the Joy which the Saviour *gives*, but finds it is infinitely better, than any, or all of thoſe carnal, ſenſual Pleaſures, which for HIM it *leaves*.—Come then, thou delaying Soul, that art loth to leave the Pleaſures of Sin, come, *taſte & ſee how good the Lord is!* And thou ſhalt find, that God in Chriſt, will be thy *exceeding Joy!* A Joy, far exceeding any Pleaſure, thou haſt ever had or hoped for: That is infinitely excellent in itſelf, that infinitely exceeds all thy preſent Conception, & that infinitely ſurpaſſeth all Expreſſion!—And think, if thou refuſe to come now, to partake of thoſe rich Dainties of God's

free Grace, unto which thou art invited at the Gospel Feast: How justly the Lord may be *angry*, & resolve concerning thee, That thou shalt *never taste of his Supper!* Of his rich Provision, to thine eternal Salvation!

But suppose, you that make Excuses, If you neglect this great Salvation To-Day, & God was *not* to send you to Hell To-morrow, but to forgive your Sins, & save your Souls: Yet, think, How greatly by this your Sin, you will *dishonour* that great God, whom you hope will be to you, *The God of Pardon!* Oh! han't you dishonoured him too much already? What, presume still upon his *Mercy*, even in the *Hope* of it! Think, How by this your Sin, you will *pierce* & *wound* that Dear *Saviour* afresh, that was once pierced on the Cross, for the Sins of all those that shall be saved. Can you go on to wound the *Saviour*, even in Hope of being *saved* by him! Oh remember, if you are of that Number which he dy'd for, every one of your past *Sins*, against his holy Law, have been to HIM, like those rugged *Nails*, which wounded & fastned his blessed *Hands & Feet* to the Cross: And this your great Sin, in refusing to return unto God by Christ; which is directly against his saving Gospel, is like that cruel *Spear*, which pierced his blessed *Side*. This Sin of *Unbelief*, of rejecting the Saviour's Grace, pierceth him afresh, it wounds him as it were, to the very Heart!

Look then, look upon the pierced Saviour, thou delaying Sinner; get by Faith under the Flowings of his precious Blood, which alone can cleanse thee from all Sin. And there behold his boundless Love to Sinners, even the very chief, in that he dy'd for them, that they might live! For unto *Thee*, even to *Thee*, he says, "Behold ME, behold ME!" "And I, says he, if I be lifted up, (upon the Cross, upon the Throne, upon the Pole of the saving Gospel;) I will draw all Men unto ME." Behold then, Christ crucified, lifted up upon the accursed Tree, the painful, shameful Cross, pierced & wounded for Sinners, bleeding & dying for them, in their Room & Stead, that they might live, thro' his Death, while every of their Sins, was the Cause of his Sufferings. Attempt to look, poor Sinner, to look for thyself, to this glorious Object, & think, Was it for *Me*, that *Jesus dy'd?* Was it *my Sin*, that *pierced him?* It was for *me*,

if I am now willing to receive him: It was *my Sin* that pierced him. And shall I, can I, *go* on to sin against his dying Love! Oh, *No*:—Methinks thy Heart should thus answer. I am sure it will, if thou feelest the Drawings of the Father, the Drawings of the Saviour, by his Holy Spirit, unto a lively Faith: And say thou wilt, "I'll delay no longer, but run, tho' a Hell-deserving Sinner, into the open Arms of the bleeding Saviour: Who has said, *Look unto* ME; *& be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth.*" Thus, Look to JESUS, for the Whole of that great Salvation which HE hath wrought, & for thy *own* Salvation by him alone. For Salvation from Sin, as well as Wrath, from the Power of Sin here, & from the Punishment due to Sin hereafter, for Heart, & Lip, & Life-Holiness unto God in this World, for a Meetness to enjoy, & a Fitness to glorify him here, in the Life of Grace begun; & for an Increase & Perseverance in Grace, until Grace is ripened into Glory, & thou art blest, with the immediate Vision & full Fruition of God in Christ, unto Ages without End. For, if by the Power of God, thy Heart is thus wrought upon, to *believe in Christ Jesus the Lord*, & to give up thyself to him in *Love*, to be entirely *his*: Thou shalt *not perish*, but have *everlasting Life*: begun here, & complete hereafter. "He, saith our Lord, that drinketh of the Water that I shall give him, (of the Spirit & Grace of God) shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life.—And,

Consider, You that are young in Years, What great Advantages you will have, if you remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth. Unto You the Saviour says, *I love them that love* ME, *& those that seek me early, shall find me*, Prov. viii. 17. It is a very taking Thing to the Heart of Christ, to see young Persons set their Hearts upon HIM. "I remember thee, (he said to his Church, when in his Infant-State) the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after ME in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown." And thus he says of & to every young Man & Woman, that seek the Lord early, that cleave to him closely, & follow him in his Ways, according to his Word, thro' Difficulty.

culty. And O what a glorious Promiſe is this, that is given to young Seekers, to thoſe that ſeek *Jeſus* betimes, *They ſhall find me!* *They* ſhall find me, certainly, ſpeedily & eminently, to be their Saviour, to their preſent Joy, & eternal Glory, *whoever* periſh eternally. And O what ſpecial Favours, what eminent Honours, & what bright Glories, hath Chriſt prepared, & will beſtow upon thoſe, that ſeek him early! Chriſt's Love indeed, to the youngeſt Soul that ſeeks him, is a *Preventing Love.* Chriſt firſt loves, & ſeeks that *Soul*, before that Soul in Love can ſeek *him.* But yet, when a young Soul begins to love Chriſt, as being firſt loved by him, it is ſo delightful to him, that in Love unknown, he will manifeſt himſelf to that Soul, as he doth not unto the World; aye, & often he doth it in ſuch an eminent Manner, as he doth not, even to many of his own dear Children. Young Souls, that love Chriſt, ſhall be his *ſpecial Favourites*; Boſom-communion with him, is often their happy Lot. As for *Honours*, the Honour that cometh from God only, the Honour of preſent Uſefulneſs, & of eminent Uſefulneſs, in Divine Service, is uſually conferred upon thoſe who ſeek Chriſt early. And as to *Glory*, a diſtinguiſhed Crown of immortal Bliſs, is prepared for thoſe hereafter, who in early Piety, & abundant Duty, have been diſtinguiſhingly favour'd & honour'd by Chriſt here, & who thence, have diſtinguiſh'd themſelves in the Love & Service of him, their glorious Lover, their Royal Maſter.—Again, Let me ſay,

Secondly, Unto *You*, whoſe Eyes the Lord *hath opened*, & whoſe Hearts the Lord *hath engaged*, to *remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth*: Admire that rich, free, diſtinguiſhing *Grace*, which gave *you* "Repentance towards God, & Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:" Unto your preſent Joy in him, & everlaſting Salvation by him: While *Thouſands* of young Perſons, round about you, are left to purſue the Pleaſures of Senſe & Sin, are in a Soul-ſtarving Condition now, & in apparent Danger of the Wrath which is to come, in the eternal Damnation of Hell! Oh, Remember *you*, your *Creator*, in an eſpecial Manner, *in the Days of your Youth*. God's infinite Love to you hath laid you under infinite Obligations to *Him*. Hath God favoured you with an

an *early Converſion*: Labour to improve your *early Days*, for the Advancement of his Glory, & the Furtherance of your own, & others Salvation. For, Conſider, *The Time of Youth*, is the prime Seaſon, an eminent Time, to *enjoy God*, & to *glorify him*. While Perſons are young, the Powers of their Souls, & the Members of their Bodies, are more ſtrong & active; to take in Divine Things, & to be employ'd in Divine Service. The Heads & Hearts & Hands, of young Perſons, are far more at Liberty for God, than theirs are, who grown to Maturity, are cloſely engaged in the enſnaring Things of Life. A Thouſand Cares & Fears, are apt to divert & diſtract the Minds of thoſe, who are engaged in Family Affairs, & worldly Concerns. Be intreated then, You that are converted young, to go on diligently & increaſingly, to *remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth*. To ſeek him in all the appointed Means of Grace, to read & hear his Word, to meditate thereon, & to walk according to the Rules thereof: In Repentance towards God, & Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; In Love to the Lord, & his People; in Obedience to Parents; in Faithfulneſs to Maſters; & in an inoffenſive, courteous, winning Behaviour unto all. And eſpecially, *Flee Youthful Luſts*; *Turn away your Eyes from beholding Vanity*; & ſhun every Thing, that tends to Carnality, & to hinder your Spirituality. Beware of contracting an intimate Acquantance with any, but thoſe that fear the Lord; & in their Company, beware of Levity, of light, & frothy Diſcourſe, which tends to increaſe & ſtrengthen the natural Vanity of the Mind. In ſpiritual Company, promote ſpiritual Diſcourſe, which will increaſe your Spirituality. Endeavour to win other Souls to Chriſt, & to draw them to walk with you, in the Paths of Holineſs, in the Ways of God; that they may be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting Salvation.—For if you thus by Faith & Love, comply with the Call of God in his Word, to *remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth*: The Lord will account himſelf *glorify'd in you*; & you will be *happy in Him*; much *Sin* will be prevented, which otherwiſe will be committed, to God's Diſhonour & your Soul's Wounding:

ing: Much *Peace* will attend you in this World, & you ſhall *enter into Peace* in the World to come. For, *Great Peace have they that love* God's *Law*, that comply with his revealed Will; great is their inward Peace, amidſt outward Trouble. And "Mark the perfect Man, & behold the Upright; for the End of that Man is Peace." He hath Peace with God, thro' the Redeemer's Blood, & Peace of Conſcience, thro' the Sprinkling of the Blood of Jeſus, & in the Way of Holineſs; & he ſhall enter into that eternal Bliſs, which is prepared for the Sons of Peace, his *End* ſhall be *Everlaſting Life*. *Remember* then *thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them.*—That *the God of all Grace*, will bleſs theſe weak Lines, to young Perſons that read them, that they may be excited thereby, to ſeek after the *ſubſtantial Pleaſures* of *true Religion*, which are infinitely preferrable to all the Delights of *Senſe*: That *God* may be *glorified*, & their *Souls ſaved*, in the *Day of Chriſt*: is the hearty Deſire of,

Dear Children,

Your Soul's Well-wiſher, &c.

LETTER III. To the *Young* and *Middle-Aged*: To warn them of ſome of the *Snares of Life*.

Dear Souls,

PERMIT me in Love to Chriſt & you, to give you a Word of Advice, to beware of ſome of the *Snares of Life*. And a few Words I would give,

Firſt. Unto *You* that *know the Lord*, or rather, have been *known* of HIM, unto the Salvation of your Souls by him. And what ſhall I ſay to *you*? Need I acquaint you, you know it already, but think of it frequently, That "Satan your grand Adverſary, goeth about like a roring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour." And tho' the Lord will not ſuffer him to deſtroy your Souls eternally; yet

yet from his Enmity againſt God, & againſt you as his, he will do his utmoſt to diſturb your Peace, & rob you of your preſent Felicity. And this he attempts divers Ways, not only by innumerable Suggeſtions preſented to your Minds immediately, to draw you off from God, but alſo by preſenting a Thouſand outward Occurrences in Life, as ſo many *Snares*, to entrap your Souls, & hinder you in your ſpiritual Race. You live in a World of Snares; & the Things of Time & Senſe, are inſnaring to the Soul in themſelves, & more inſnaring by the Fleſh, indwelling Sin in us, & much more ſo, as they are inwardly improved by Satan's Temptations, in order to prevent our giving that Glory to God, by Faith & Love, which is due unto his Name, & our enjoying that Bliſs in Him, & in his Service, which new-born Souls are capable of in the preſent Time, as ſubſervient to additional Joys & Glories in a bleſt Eternity. And as the Snares of Life in particular, are innumerable, I ſhall only give a Hint, as the Lord enables me, of three or four Seaſons in general, in which Souls that ſet out for Heaven, meet with their particular Snares on Earth. And thus,

The Time of *ſingle Life*: This is a Time of *Snares*. When young Perſons that are Godly, are grown up to be employ'd in the common Affairs of ſingle Life, they are often placed in Families where there is much *Hurry*. And in this Station, their Temptation from the World, the Fleſh & the Devil, will be to *neglect Religion*; to neglect the Performance of Duty, or to be too haſty & ſlightly in the Performance thereof. And this, ſo far as it is comply'd with, will ſo ſadly draw the Soul off from God, that it will ſoon feel an awful Decay in its firſt Love. Carnality, will ſadly prevail againſt Spirituality, to God's Diſhonour, & the Soul's Wounding. Beware then You that are *Godly*, whether Children or Servants, whoſe Lot is caſt in Families where there are many & great *Hurries*, that you loſe not your *God*, in a *Crowd*; that you forget not your *Beloved*, amidſt a Thouſand diverting & diſtracting *Things*, which tend to allure, or perplex your *Hearts*. *Watch unto Prayer*, Morning and Evening ſtatedly, lie not down upon your Bed, nor riſe from it, without Prayer & Praiſe, to the God

God of your Life, as the God of Nature, & the God of Grace. And if on any emergent Occaſion, you are obliged to be ſhorter than you would or ſhould, watch for the firſt Opportunity, for a more ample Performance of Duty. And watch *in Duty*, how much, or how little there is of *Spirituality*, how much, or how little your Heart is drawn out to God in Duty, & how much, or how little you enjoy of God therein; that you may give Thanks unto him for the one, & lament before him the other. For a lamentable Thing it is, when the *Salt* of the *Sacrifice* is wanting, when the Spirit of Grace & of Supplication, is lacking, in the Prayer we preſent unto God thro' Chriſt; when we have but little of gracious out-goings of Heart unto God in Duty, & but little of ſenſible, ſanctifying, & comforting Influence from him therein. But let not the Diſcernment of the Want of gracious Influence & gracious Exerciſe, *deter you* from the Performance of *Duty*, from praying as you *can*, but rather let it *excite you* to cry more earneſtly for the *Holy Spirit*, to enable you to pray more ſpiritually, more acceptably to God, & profitably & delightfully to your own Souls. And beſides ſtated Prayer Morning & Evening, well it wou'd be for young People that live in the midſt of Hurries, if they retired now & then for a few *Minutes at a Time*, to *pour out their Hearts unto God*; who meeteth thoſe that remember him in his Ways. *Mental Prayer*, or the frequent lifting up of the Heart to God, in the midſt of Buſineſs, is likewiſe a great, & ſweet Duty. And ſo is alſo the *Reading* of God's *precious Word*; & if you can read but a Verſe or two at a Time, aſk for the Holy Spirit to open & apply the Word to your Hearts, & endeavour to *meditate thereon*, while your Hands are employ'd in the World, to direct you in Duty, & inform you of Privilege, that God may be glorified in & by *you*, & you enabled to rejoice & triumph in *him*. For if you thus give all Diligence to the Performance of Duty, you will find it an excellent Means to prevent Degeneracy, & to promote Spirituality, to maintain ſweet Communion with God, & an honourable Walk before him, even in the midſt of Hurry.—And as you are to walk in the midſt of Snares

continually, if you don't thus in well-doing commit the Keeping of your Souls unto God daily: Alas, you will be entangled ſuddenly, & backſlide from God inſenſibly, until he is diſhonoured, & you are wounded, grievouſly.—And tho' the Lord will never leave nor forſake his own People, as to his gracious Regard to them, & Care of them; yet he may & will correct his backſliding Children, by the Withdraw of his ſenſible Preſence from them, & the Manifeſtations of his Love, which is better than Life, & make the Want thereof, more bitter unto them than Death. And thus it is a very eaſy Thing, which will give the greateſt Uneaſineſs, to loſe our God, in the midſt of a Crowd. Happy then, my dear young Friends, will you be, if you endeavour earneſtly, to eſcape the Snares which are laid for your Taking ſpeedily, & to walk with God cloſely, even in the Midſt of Hurry.—But further,

The Time of the *Approach* of a *Marriage-State:* This alſo is a Time of *Snares.* Divers Perſons will offer themſelves, be preſented to view by others, or by Perſons own Minds, for *Companions in Life*; that are not ſuitable, according to the *Rules of God's Word.* And when ſuch Objects are taking to the natural Affections of thoſe Perſons to whom they are any way preſented, they are very inſnaring, & eſpecially, if their Circumſtances are ſuitable, & appear to be advantageous. At ſuch a Time & in ſuch a Caſe, *Snares* are many & great: From thoſe Objects which are preſented to View, from the Minds of thoſe Perſons themſelves, unto whom they are preſented, from the Inſinuations of other Perſons, & above all, from the Temptations of Satan: Stirring up & exciting the Minds of *Believers*, to marry with *Unbelievers*, & in ſuggeſting divers Excuſes for this unlawful Practice. And whenever any Child of God is caught in this Snare of the Devil, & joins in Marriage with one that don't know the Lord; as he thereby ſins againſt God greatly, ſo he wrongs his own Soul exceedingly, & may expect to be chaſtiſed ſeverely. This was one of thoſe God-provoking Sins, that bro't the Flood upon the old World. When "The Sons of God ſaw the Daughters

of Men that they were fair; they took them Wives of all which they choſe." Upon which the Lord ſaid, "My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man, for that he alſo is Fleſh." Or, ſo corrupt & abominable in my Sight, that I will deſtroy him with a Flood; for it repenteth me that I have made him. When the Sons of God, or of the Church of God, join'd in Marriage with the Daughters of Men, the Children which they bare to them were *Giants*, Men of *Renown*; not for Goodneſs, but for Wickedneſs. By theſe mixt Marriages, Profeſſors with Prophane, God was diſhonoured, the Minds of his profeſſing People drawn off from his Worſhip & Service, & the Offspring which they had, bro't up in Wickedneſs. This abominable Sin, *Solomon* likewiſe fell into; he clave to idolatrous Women in *Love*; altho' he was a Man ſo eminent for God, & the *Beloved* of the LORD, for Temple-Work, Yet even *him*, did his Wives cauſe to *ſin*, they drew away his Heart to the Worſhip of falſe Gods.—And thus in the Time of *Ezra* & *Nehemiah*, the Children of *Iſrael* ſinned greatly in marrying ſtrange Wives, in that the *Holy Seed* mingled themſelves with the *People of the Lands*. Which Sin of theirs the Lord chaſtiſed ſorely, altho' in the Greatneſs of his Mercy he puniſhed them leſs than their Iniquity deſerved. As was confeſſed freely, while *Ezra* lamented the Greatneſs of their Iniquity, Ch. ix. 13, 14. *And after all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds, & for our great Treſpaſs, ſeeing that thou our God haſt puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve, & haſt given us ſuch Deliverance as this: Should we again break thy Commandments, & join in Affinity with the People of theſe Abominations? Wouldſt thou not be angry with us till thou hadſt conſumed us, that there ſhould be no Remnant nor Eſcaping?* And this Sin of the People, *Nehemiah* contended againſt, and ſays, *In thoſe Days alſo ſaw I* Jews *that had married Wives of* Aſhdod; *of* Ammon *& of* Moab: *And their Children ſpake half in the Speech of* Aſhdod, *& could not ſpeak in the* Jews *Language, but according to the Language of each People. And I contended with them.—Did not* Solomon *King of* Iſrael *ſin by theſe Things? Yet among many Nations was there*

there no King like him, who was beloved of his God, & God made him King over all Iſrael: *Nevertheleſs, even* him *did out-landiſh Women cauſe to* ſin. *Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great Evil, to tranſgreſs againſt our God, in marrying Strange Wives:* Nehe. xiii. 23, &c. And tho' in a *Chriſtian Nation*, the Children of God are not often in Danger of marrying with groſs *Idolaters*; yet if they marry with *Unbelievers*, they will draw away their Hearts from that ſpiritual Worſhip of the true God, which is their Duty and Privilege. They will be a Hindrance to them in Divine Service, & a Means of drawing their Affections from Heaven to Earth, from the eternal God, to the Creatures & Things of Time; which is ſpiritual, or *Heart-Idolatry*, & which the Lord will chaſtiſe ſeverely.

Let the dear Children of God then, at this Time of Snares, be earneſt at the Throne of Grace for *Preſervation*; & let them regard ſtrictly, the *Rules* given them in the *Word of God*, to direct their Practice in this Reſpect. As 1 Cor. vii. 39. *The Wife is bound by the Law as long as her Husband liveth: but if her Husband be dead, She is at Liberty to be married to whom She will*, only in the Lord. And 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c. *Be ye* not *unequally yoked together with* Unbelievers: *for what Fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with Unrighteouſneſs? What Communion hath Light with Darkneſs? And what Concord hath Chriſt with Belial? Or what Part hath he that believeth with an Infidel! And what Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? for ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them & walk in them; & will be their God, & they ſhall be my People.* Here is a full Direction given to ſingle Believers, *To marry only in the Lord*, & reſtrained they are by the Word of God, from being *unequally yoked together with Unbelievers*. And many are the Arguments uſed, to enforce the Duty of marrying in the Lord, & to reſtrain the Sin of being unequally yoked: What *Fellowſhip* hath *Righteouſneſs* with *Unrighteouſneſs?* &c. And tho' this Apoſtle in his former Epiſtle exhorts thoſe who had unbelieving Husbands or Wives to live together, if thoſe who were Unbelievers were pleaſed to dwell with the Believers; & encourageth

them to abide in their Marriage Duty to their reſpective Yokefellows, with a *What knoweſt thou, O Wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy Husband? or how knoweſt thou, O Man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy Wife?* Which may ſerve for Direction & Encouragement unto thoſe who are already in a Marriage Relation, to abide together in that Station; Yet for ſingle Believers, the former Direction, To *marry only in the Lord*, & that Reſtriction, *Not to be unequally yoked together with Unbelievers*, ought to be carefully regarded; & the Encouragement given to Believers who are married with Unbelievers, to abide with them in that Relation, in Hope of their Salvation; ought in no wiſe to encourage ſingle Believers, to enter into the Marriage-State, contrary to the expreſs Rules of God's Word. And if any Believer ſhould dare to marry an Unbeliever, in Hope of being inſtrumental in that Relation, for the others Salvation, as he thereby miſapplies the Word of God ſadly, & ſins againſt him greatly; he will be likely to read, perhaps I may ſay, he will certainly, one Way or other, at one Time or other, be made to Read, his Sin, in his Puniſhment, while by Divine Chaſtiſement, the one is pointed to by the other, as clearly, as if by a Beam from the Sun's Body.—Again.

The Time of a *Marriage-State*, is a Time of *Snares*: With reſpect to, both *Proſperity*, & *Adverſity*. When Perſons enter into the World, the World is apt to crowd in upon them, the Cares & Concerns of providing *comfortably* for a *Family*, are apt to poſſeſs their Minds, & engage their Hearts too *eagerly*. And if *Riches* flow in upon Perſons, they often ſteal away their Hearts from God *inſenſibly*: The *Deceitfulneſs of Riches*, while by their fair Appearance, the Carnality of the Mind, & the Suggeſtions of the Devil, they promiſe that Satisfaction, which they cannot give; is very *inſnaring*. Suddenly & inſenſibly, rich Perſons are apt to ſlide into carnal Security, into Forgetfulneſs of the living God, who gives them all Things richly to enjoy, into Truſt in uncertain Riches, & into Earthly-mindedneſs, which will leave but little or no Room in their Hearts for Heaven; aye, & into Excuſes too, as if they were under a kind of Neceſſity, for this Degeneracy; till the Backſlider in Heart, is filled

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with his own Devices, & sadly finds, That all Things under the Sun, are but *Vanity & Vexation of Spirit*. At this Season then, it becomes the dear Children of God to *watch & pray*, that they *enter not into Temptation*. To ask the Assistance of the *Holy Spirit*, & to read and meditate on *God's Word*, & especially on such Parts of it that declare the Vanity & Uncertainty of all Things *here*, that they may not set their *Eyes* upon that which *is not*, which hath not that Substance in it, which it seems to have, but will leave the Soul empty, that pursues Shadows eagerly. Good it is for those that are rich, not to engage in more Business on Earth, than what they can manage without Hindrance in their Way to Heaven. And frequently let them think, That they are not absolute *Lords*, & sole Proprietors of what they possess; but *Stewards* that must give Account, how they improve the Stock entrusted in their Hands for *God*. That laying aside *every Weight*, & the Sin of Earthly-mindedness, which easily besets those in affluent Circumstances, they may deny Themselves of earthly Grandeur, & take up their *Cross*, & follow *Christ*, with an heavenly Temper. That they may *honour the Lord with their Substance*, be *rich in good Works*; & thus *lay up for themselves a good* Foundation (for Reward) *against the Time to come*; *that* (in additional Honours & Glories, according to God's Promise of Grace) *they may lay hold on* Eternal Life: And have an abundant Entrance *ministred unto them into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ*.

And as Prosperity, so *Adversity* has its *Snares*: By reason of that Trouble which naturally ariseth from the Things which we want, of that Desire which is apt to be in our Minds, after Things which God don't see best for us, & of Unbelief, which joins with the Temptations of Satan, that the Lord hath forsaken us, or doth not, will not take that Care of us, which he hath, & hath promis'd to have, of his own People. At such a Time as this then, it is good for them that know the Lord, frequently to address the Throne of Grace, for the Assistance of his *Holy Spirit*, to open & apply *his Word* to their Hearts, for their Instruction & Consolation; & to

meditate often on those Declarations & Promises of Grace, wherein the abundant Goodness & Covenant Faithfulness of God to his People are largely expresst. As, "That the Lord will not forget, nor forsake his People, for his own Name's Sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make them his People. That what is good; the Lord will give: That no good Thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. That those whom the Lord loveth, he chastneth, for their Profit, to make them thereby Partakers of his Holiness: And that all Things (even the most grieving & afflicting) work together for Good, unto them that love God, to them that are the Called according to his Purpose: &c. Good it is for Saints try'd with Adversity, to think frequently, That God's infinite *Love* to their Persons, is the Fountain-cause of all their Afflictions. And that tho' he may chastise them for *Sin*; those very Chastisements proceed not from God as a wrathful *Judge*, they light not on them as a *Curse*, to satisfy avenging *Justice*; & so are not designed for their *Destruction*, but for their *Salvation*. That their Soul-Prosperity, is God's *End*, in the greatest Adversity. And that their spiritual Advantage, & eternal Bliss, shall certainly be the happy *Effect*, of all their present Trials. That the designed Work of their Conformity to Christ thereby, as the *Pleasure of the Lord*, shall prosper in *his Hands*. That while they are in Tribulation, they shall not be left *alone*, to endure it in their *own Strength*; but have their *Beloved* with them, to support & comfort them, his Arm to lean on, and his Bosom to rest in, while coming up from the *Wilderness*, to the *Land of Promise*. And good it is for tried Saints, in those Trials which they meet with from *Men*, whether good or bad, to look away from the afflicting *Instrument*, to the all-wise, all-gracious, & almighty *Agent*, & the great Designs of the great God, for our Good, by the most evil Thing that can be done to us by any Creature. And a rare Piece of spiritual Wisdom it is, not to grieve ourselves *over-much*, for cross Providences from God, nor for afflicting Things from Men; nor to muse upon Griefs *constantly*, which tends to sink our Spirits into *Heaviness & Inactivity*: But to consider the great Ends of God's

eternal

eternal Love, in all his Fatherly Anger, which way ſoever it is diſplay'd, & to apply ourſelves to that good Work, which he calls us to, in every evil Time: viz. *To glorify God in the Fires:* To ſubmit to his Will meekly & patiently, & to endure Grief cheerfully & thankfully; that we loſe not that Opportunity which is put into our Hands to glorify God in Sufferings, that preſent Joy, which in a way of Duty we ſhould have in Griefs, nor that future Praiſe, Honour & Glory, which of the freeſt Grace, is promis'd as a rich Reward unto tried Saints, that behave well in the Trial. For if we thus become *Followers of them*, who humbly & cheerfully do & ſuffer the *Will of God*, we with them ſhall *inherit the Promiſes.* Whereas if we neglect our great Work of Faith & Love, of holy Truſt in God, & ſweet Obedience to him under Suffering; we ſhall diſhonour our heavenly Father greatly, wound our own Souls exceedingly, & not gain, but loſe, for Eternity. To the great *Work* then, of *glorifying God*, in *ſuffering Times*, let tried Saints apply themſelves diligently & conſtantly; & they ſhall find, That GOD *is their Refuge & Strength, a very preſent Help in Trouble:* They ſhall have Joy in Sorrow, & a ſpeedy Deliverance from it, into everlaſting Joy & Glory, when Sorrow & Sighing ſhall flee away: For, *The* LORD *ſhall be their everlaſting Light, & the Days of their Mourning ſhall be ended.*—But a Word,

Secondly. Unto young Perſons who are yet *unconverted.* And what ſhall I ſay to *You:* You are encompaſſed about with *Snares* on every Side. The World, the Fleſh & the Devil, are all engaged to entrap you. And you have neither Wiſdom nor Strength in yourſelves, to diſcern nor reſiſt Temptations. What need have *you* then, to *cry to the Lord* continually, for his *Holy Spirit*, to guide you in every Path of Duty? To give you *Faith in Chriſt*, & *Repentance towards God*; that you may walk in the Ways of *Holineſs*, which are the *Paths of Life*, to *depart from Hell beneath?* Conſider, You that are Young, & Strong, That the Time of *Youth & Strength*, is a Time of *many Snares*; that you were born into this World, with your Backs upon God, & your Faces towards Sin, & ſo towards the Damnation of Hell; that to

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get you thither is the Devil's Aim, in tempting you by his evil Angels, or by wicked Men, unto any Sin; that God calls you to *forsake the Foolish, & live*, & to *go in the Way of Understanding*; that your Lives may be happy here, & your Souls saved hereafter. And if you have any Regard to your own Salvation, beware of those Paths, which lead directly to Damnation. Beware of neglecting *Prayer to God for Preservation*, as you are in an evil World, from the Evil of the World. Beware of neglecting to *read & hear God's Word*: For, "Wherewith shall a young Man cleanse his Way, but by taking Heed thereto according to God's Precepts." Beware of keeping Company with *evil Men*, that draw you to *sin against God*. Beware of frothy, filthy *Discourse*, use it not yourselves, join not with it in others, by delighting yourselves in their filthy Communications, & laughing at that, at which you ought to tremble. Beware of *profaning the Sabbath*, by Idleness & vain Discourse at Home, or by walking the Streets or Fields with vain Company abroad. And especially beware of *neglecting the Worship of God*, in Prayer & Praise, in Reading & Hearing his Word, in private & publick, which you are eminently called to on *God's holy Day*: And also of Frequenting *Ale-Houses*, either in, or after the Time of Divine Service. Take Heed also of visiting Alehouses *needlessly* on the *Working Days*. For there the Wicked assemble, & there they pour out their wicked Words and Oaths, their vain & filthy Communications freely: Which (more infectious than the Plague) corrupt the Minds & Manners of those that hear them greatly. Take Heed therefore, of assembling with Sinners, lest God should draw you away with them, in the Ways of Sin, unto eternal Death. For this is threatned, Psa. cxxv. 5. *As for such as turn aside to their crooked Ways, the* LORD *shall lead them forth with the Workers of Iniquity.* You may think, when you begin to *visit Alehouses*, that you will not make a *constant Practice of it*. But alas, it mayn't be in your *Power*, when once you join with the Wicked in *sinful Ways*, to *forsake* their Company, & *recover yourselves* out of their *Snares*. For, Besides the Deceitfulness of Sin, which puts you further under the Power of Satan, when God hath given Checks of Mind to

Persons,

Perſons, & they will not take *Warning*, he often gives them up to their *own Heart's Luſt*, to add *Drunkenneſs to Thirſt*, till they are righteouſly made to *drink* the *Vials of his Wrath forever*. And be aſſured, Dear Souls, That *that* Company you love & cleave to in *Life*, you ſhall be joined with at *Death*, & to *all Eternity*: You ſhall be gathered to your *own Company*. Which if Wicked, will be your Tormentors, & your Companions in Torment, to a miſerable Eternity! As you have ſinned together, & excited one another to Sin, you muſt ſuffer together, & be tormented by, & Tormentors to, each other for ever. *The Tares*, the Wicked, ſhall be *bound together in Bundles to be burned*. Thoſe that by Sin, have fitted themſelves, & each other, for the Fire of God's Wrath in Hell; to their mutual & unutterable Torment, muſt ſuffer together in everlaſting Burnings, without ſo much as a Drop of Water to cool their Tongue, without Intermiſſion, to an endleſs Duration!—*Some* Publick Houſes, indeed there muſt be, for the Refreſhment of Travellers, of Men & Beaſt. But the far *greateſt Part* of them, are needleſs, & very pernicious.—And *Wo* be to Thoſe, who engage in that Buſineſs for Worldly *Gain*, & when in it, are Inſtruments of drawing Multitudes of Souls to *Sin*, the Wages of which, is *Death!* If they could gain their *Thouſands* of Gold & Silver, their *Bags of Treaſure*, are like to prove but as ſo many *Piles of Wood*, to torment their Souls forever in *eternal Fire*. Oh what a Huge Maſs of *Guilt*, muſt they contract, who beſides the Guilt of their *own* innumerable Sins, are guilty of drawing *Thouſands* into Sin, & are Partakers with *others* in their abominable Evils! And what an intolerable Weight of *Wrath*, muſt ſuch Perſons expect, if they live and die in a *ſinful State!*—And as thoſe that *keep* Publick Houſes, who ſuffer Drunkenneſs, Swearing, & Sabbath-breaking in their Dwellings: So thoſe that *viſit* ſuch Places, more than *Neceſſity* calls for, are in great *Danger* of *everlaſting Fire!* Beware then, of keeping ſuch *Company*, that drink, & curſe, & ſwear, & of Drinking, & pronouncing Oaths & Curſes, or any evil Words *yourſelves*. Beware of *taking the Lord's Name in vain*; & in a Word, of every Sin againſt God's *holy Law*; & eſpecially beware of ſlighting

ing or deſpiſing his *bleſſed Goſpel*, the Miniſters of it, & the People that hear it, & live according to it. Once more, Beware of *ſtifling Convictions*, when God ſtrikes your Conſcience with the Guilt of your Sins, & your Danger of the Wrath to come; & eſpecially beware of *neglecting to ſeek God*, when he excites your Minds to wait upon him in the *Means of Grace*, whereby he is pleaſed to convert Sinners, & ſave them to *eternal Glory*.—For if you walk careleſsly in a World of Snares, and neglect the Calls of God in his Word, to forſake your Sins, & return unto Him, in Hope of his promis'd Mercy; you will fall into Sin exceedingly, put yourſelves under the Power of Satan more abundantly, your Hearts will be hardned greatly, & God may give you up juſtly, to commit Iniquity greedily, until you periſh eternally. For as every Sin, increaſeth your Guilt; ſo every Sin, leads you ſtill further, & further *off from God*, & renders you more incapable of a *Return unto him*. And I wou'd appeal to your own Conſciences, If the *Neglect* of Prayer, don't make you more *unfit* for it? If the *Neglect* of Reading, or Hearing God's Word, don't *alienate* your Minds more from it? If *neglecting* to keep holy the Sabbath Day, don't make you more *regardleſs* about it? If *keeping* of wicked Company, don't make you *love it?* If *frequenting* Ale-Houſes, don't draw your Hearts more *ſtrongly thither?* If Oaths & Curſes, *heard* or *uttered* by you, don't make thoſe horrid Sins more *natural* to you? And if ſinning *againſt Convictions*, don't *ſtifle* thoſe Convictions, & make your Heart ſo *hard*, that you can ſin with little, or no *Remorſe?* &c.

I might have hinted *other Snares*, which attend you in the Purſuit of the *lawful Things of this Life:* Which may be purſued *unlawfully*. As they always *are*, when they become your *chief Care*. When your Hearts are ſet upon *gaining of the World*, of the Riches, Honours & Pleaſures of this Life, & you are not concerned chiefly & eminently about the *Salvation of your Souls*, about an Intereſt in thoſe durable Riches & Honours, which are to be enjoyed in and with *Chriſt*, & about thoſe glorious Pleaſures, which are at *God's Right Hand for evermore*, in Life eternal. And O what Madneſs & Folly is it in a rational

rational Creature, to catch at *Shadows*, & let go the *Subſtance!* To ſeek for the *Earth*, & neglect *Heaven!* To regard the Life of his *Body*, & care not if his *Soul* periſh! "For what is a Man profited, ſaith our Lord, if he gain the whole World, & loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?"

Attend therefore, you that are Young & Middle-aged, to the Lord's Voice in his Word: Who ſays, in his infinite Grace, "Let the Wicked forſake his Way, & the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: (his Ways of Prophaneneſs on the one Hand, & his Thoughts of being juſtify'd & ſaved by his own Righteouſneſs on the other Hand:) & let him return unto the LORD, (*now*, while it is called *To-Day*;) & he will have Mercy upon him; & unto our GOD, for he will abundantly pardon!" And, "Seek firſt the Kingdom of God, & the Righteouſneſs thereof: And all other Things (on this Earth, that God ſees beſt for him in his Way to Heaven:) ſhall be added unto him."—That the Lord may bleſs the few Hints given unto many young Perſons, to prevent and break the *Snares* they are expoſed to, & entangled in; that God may be *glorified* in their preſent happy *Converſion*, & *everlaſting Salvation*: is the hearty Wiſh of,

Dear Souls,

Your real Friend & willing Servant, &c.

LETTER IV. To the *Aged*: To intreat them to improve their *preſent Time*, for a *bleſt Eternity*.

My Dear Friends,

YOU that are far advanced in Years, permit me to offer a Word to *You*, to intreat you to improve your *preſent Time*, for a *bleſt Eternity*.—And let me give a few Hints,

Firſt. Unto You who are *unconverted*: And what ſhall I ſay to *You*? Your Time is juſt almoſt gone, your Sands are almoſt run, Death will ſoon cut you down; &

as the Tree *falls*, ſo it will *lie*, whether toward the *North*, toward the Winds & Storms of God's *Wrath*, or toward the *South*, toward the cheering Beams, & refreſhing Gales of his infinite *Favour*: As Time leaves you, Eternity will find you: "For there is no Work, Wiſdom nor Device in the Grave, whither you are haſtening." Betake yourſelves ſpeedily therefore unto GOD by *Prayer*, intreat him to give you his *Holy Spirit*, to create you anew in Chriſt Jeſus. For without *Regeneration*, you can have no *Salvation*. Our Lord has ſaid, "Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee (that is, enjoy,) the Kingdom of God." And this great Work of Regeneration, is not in your own Power to effect. It is nothing leſs than the Almighty Power of God, as the God of all Grace, that can raiſe your Souls up, from your Death in Sin, under Curſe and Wrath, unto Faith in his Dear Son, unto ſpiritual Life in Chriſt here, & unto eternal Life with him hereafter. And therefore, when You firſt begin to think of improving your *preſent Time*, for a *bleſt Eternity*; begin with GOD, be earneſt with him for the Gift of his *Holy Spirit*, to make you *new Creatures*; for if the Lord don't thus undertake for you in *great Mercy*; you will be *loſt Souls*, to *all Eternity*. And as the Lord calls you to *ſeek him while he may be found*, & to *call upon him while he is near*, to forſake your ſinful Ways, & return unto him by Chriſt; he calls you thereby to the Uſe of your rational Faculties, to *conſider your Ways*, what they are & have been with reſpect to *Sin*, & what the End of them is like to be, with reſpect to *Death*, or their Deſert of *eternal Death*. He calls you to think ſeriouſly & frequently, of the *only Way*, whereby you can poſſibly *eſcape* the Wrath that is to come; & that looking up to him for Strength, you *attempt your Duty*, to flee for your Life ſpeedily, to *lay Hold on* Chriſt, the great Saviour, as the only *Hope* of periſhing Sinners, which is *ſet before them* in the glorious Goſpel. And who knows, but while you are thinking of theſe Things *rationally*, the God of all Grace, may enable you to think *ſpiritually?* May ſhew you your own Inability to help or ſave yourſelves, the Allſufficiency of Chriſt, to ſave you to the utmoſt, & ſweetly draw your Hearts to *believe in* JESUS, unto your *everlaſting*

lasting Salvation by him? Having this Hope then, let me intreat you, that addreſſing the Divine Throne, & depending on Divine Aſſiſtance, you give your utmoſt Diligence, to improve your ſmall Remains of *Time*, for a *bleſt* Eternity.

Conſider, I pray you, for the Lord calls you to *conſider your latter End*. And in order hereto, conſider your *Beginning*. Think of your excellent Make, in your firſt Father *Adam*, of the noble Ends for which you were created, To be *happy in God*, & *holy to him*. Think of your woful Fall from God, by & in *Adam's firſt Sin*. Think ſeriouſly, that your whole Nature is corrupted deeply, that you was *ſhapen in Iniquity*, & in *Sin did your Mothers conceive you*. That guilty & filthy, you came into this World, with a carnal Mind, that is Enmity againſt God. That being thus Sinners by *Nature*, & deſerving of God's Wrath, you have made yourſelves much more ſo by *Practice*. That you have added Sin to Sin, even to an innumerable Multitude: Sins of Childhood & Youth, Sins of riper Years, & even of old Age, Sins in every Relation, Station, & Condition of Life, Sins of Ignorance, & Sins againſt Light & Knowledge, Sins againſt God's holy Law, & Sins againſt his ſaving Goſpel. Think again, That you cannot anſwer God's Law & Juſtice, for one Sin of a Thouſand; that God hath ſaid, "Curſed be he that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them; that the Soul that ſinneth ſhall die:" That God's Truth is eternal, that the Word is gone out of his Mouth in Righteouſneſs, he will not, cannot reverſe it: That his Juſtice is ſtrict, & that it muſt have Satisfaction, an infinite Satisfaction, for the Injury done by Sin, to his infinite Being, or the offending Creature, muſt lie under the Terrors of his Wrath forever, & ſuffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire: That God is of purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity; that no unclean Perſon or Thing, can abide in the gracious, or glorious Preſence, of a God of infinite Purity. Think again, Dear Souls, If Angels of Light committed but *one Sin*, which made them black Devils, & for that one Sin were righteouſly caſt down from Heaven to Hell, to ſuffer the Puniſhment of everlaſting

lasting Fire: Oh how great a Punishment, in eternal Wrath & Death, doth all your *innumerable Sins* deserve! Think likewise, That God's righteous Law hath *condemned you already*; that there is but a Step between You & Death: And that tho' you owe such vast Sums, even to an infinite Amount, to the Law & Justice of an offended God; yet in & from yourselves, nor in, nor from any Creature or Thing, you have not *one Mite* to pay; & that God's strict Justice, according to his righteous Law which you have broken, will abate *Nothing*, but *must have* an infinite Satisfaction, or *you must sink* into eternal Damnation.—But on the other Hand,

Consider again, That tho' you are now condemned, you are not yet *damned*; there is yet *Hope* of your eternal Salvation. For behold GOD, from his infinite *Love*, to such vile Sinners as you, hath provided a *Saviour*, & a *great One!*. "Hath sent forth his Son, his only Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law. He took not on HIM the Nature of *Angels*, but the Nature of the Seed of *Abraham*." And in our Nature that sinned, HE hath obeyed God's righteous Law, in all its holy Requirements, to work out a complete Righteousness for naked Sinners, & hath suffered the Law's Penalty, even all that Curse, Wrath & Death, which the Sins of his People had deserved; & by offering up his own Soul, in their Souls stead, being an infinite Person, he made for them an infinite Satisfaction. And thus, he made Reconciliation for their Iniquity, reconciled them unto God in Himself mystically, & made Provision for their Reconciliation personally. He opened a Way by his Death, for all Peace, Grace & Glory, to be extended unto them thro' him, by his holy Spirit, unto their spiritual & eternal Life. He was raised from the Dead for their Justification, & is ascended into Heaven, & sits at the Right Hand of God, & ever lives for them to make Intercession, that they may live with him, & be fully blest with everlasting Salvation.—And this great Salvation, which God the Father hath provided in his Dear Son, & which God the Saviour hath wrought & will work for Sinners, even the very chief, is made known in the glorious Gospel, & proclaimed to be for *Whosoever will*: *According to the Commandment of the everlasting* GOD, it

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is made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith. Faith in Chriſt is required, of every Soul that deſires to be ſaved. And Unbelief, in rejecting the great Saviour, & Neglecting his great Salvation, ſhall be ſeverely puniſhed. For thus ſtands the Goſpel-Proclamation of Chriſt, as God's Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: "Go ye into all the World, & preach the Goſpel unto every Creature. He that believeth & is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned." And this *Believing* which is required, is *Submitting* to the *Saviour revealed*: Or, the Soul's Bowing, Looking, Coming to, & Relying upon, the Allſufficient Saviour, for the *Whole* of that Salvation which is *in him*, & for its *own* Salvation by him, from all Sin & Miſery, unto all Holineſs Joy & Glory, begun here, & complete hereafter. It is the Souls *Approving* of what God has declared concerning his *Son*; & Acquieſcing in *Heart*, with *God's Way* of Salvation, for its *own* Salvation; from Sin, as well as Wrath, unto Holineſs, as well as Happineſs, from deſerved preſent, & eternal Miſery, & to deſired preſent Joy in God, & eternal Glory with him: To his preſent & eternal Praiſe.—And while Faith in Chriſt is thus required of all that hear of the Saviour proclaimed, the Spirit of Chriſt is given to *work Faith*, thro' the *Word of Faith*, in all that *ſhall be ſaved*, & to enable them to *act Faith*, to come in, *gladly*, to the Saviour held forth ſo *freely*, at the joyful Sound, of the *Goſpel Call*.

Now then, Dear Souls, You that have lived to old Age, & have hitherto been Strangers to Chriſt, & unconcerned about the eternal Happineſs of your immortal Spirits: Let me appeal to your Hearts: Are you willing *now* to forſake your Sins, & to return unto God by Chriſt, who hath promiſed that he will have Mercy upon you, & abundantly pardon you? Do you think that the Blood of Chriſt alone, is ſufficient to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice for all your Sins, & to make your Peace with God, without any of your own Duties, to put in the Place of his perfect Sacrifice, or to join with it, to appeaſe an angry God? And are you *willing*, this very Moment, to have your whole Dependence, upon the Virtue of Chriſt's Blood alone, for your Cleanſing from all Sin? Do you

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think that the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone, is ſufficient to cloath your naked Souls, without any Part of your own Righteouſneſs joined with it? And are you *willing*, even now, to part with all your own Righteouſneſs, as to Dependence, to caſt it all away, as filthy Rags, that you may be found in Chriſt's perfect Righteouſneſs alone, for your Juſtification before God, & everlaſting Acceptance with him? Are you *willing* to receive Chriſt, as God's free Gift to Sinners, in all his Offices, as Prophet, Prieſt & King; to teach you to know & do the Will of God in his Word, to attone & intercede for you, & to rule in, for, & over you? In a Word, Do you deſire to be married unto the Lord; To receive Chriſt in all his infinite Fulneſs, for the rich Supply of all your Emptineſs, to receive HIM, as your ALL, in his infinite Allſufficiency to ſave, for your *own* Salvation to the Uttermoſt? And are you *free* to give up yourſelves wholly, in Soul & Body, to be the *Lord's* entirely & eternally, to live to his Honour in this World, & to be ſaved by him, unto immortal Glory with him, to his eternal Praiſe in the World to come? If you are *not* thus willing to be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt, you are not willing to be ſaved *at all*, in *God's Way*; you are not willing to be ſaved by *Chriſt*, according to the Goſpel-revelation of him, as the *only Saviour*. And if you are not willing to accept of Chriſt as God's Salvation; you cannot eſcape eternal Damnation. For Chriſt is given of God to be the *Saviour*, of none but thoſe that *obey him*, that are enabled to believe in him, to obey the Goſpel Command of Faith in him, which works by Love to him; or that are willing to receive Chriſt wholly, and to give up themſelves to him entirely & eternally.

For as I hinted before, The Royal Proclamation of God's free Grace in the Goſpel is, That *Chriſt* is for *Whoſoever will*. And as Chriſt in all his *Offices*, as Prophet, Prieſt & King, muſt be *ſo received*, by all thoſe that ſhall be *ſaved*: So the Souls that are *not* willing to receive Chriſt, in all thoſe great Offices, & unto all thoſe glorious Ends, for which God hath revealed him, have no declared *Right* to the Saviour, nor to his great Salvation. Inaſmuch as they are not willing to accept of Chriſt

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as God's unſpeakable Gift, for *Themſelves*, to be unto *them* a *complete Saviour*, nor to give up themſelves to be the *Lord's forever*.—It is not enough for the Salvation of Perſons, to have a Notion in the *Head*, That *Chriſt dy'd for Sinners*, & ſo to think, that he dy'd for *them*, that they might *live*: But they muſt believe with the *Heart*, or they *cannot be ſaved*. And this Faith which is required, is not a Perſon's firm Perſwaſion, That Chriſt dy'd for *him*, in particular, this is not the firſt Act of Faith, that is called for in the Heart, in order to Salvation. And Believers that *have* that Perſwaſion, may *loſe it*, for a Time, & yet be *ſafe* for eternal Salvation. But the Faith that is required of Sinners, is the Faith of *Submiſſion to the Saviour*: Of Looking unto HIM, for their own Salvation. As the *Iſraelites*, at God's Appointment, *look'd* to the Braſen Serpent, *for* Healing & Life, & not as *having it*, previous to their Looking. And as it came to paſs, That as many as *looked* to the Serpent, *lived*: So, as many as thus *look* to Chriſt, or are *willing*, to receive a whole Chriſt, for the Whole of God's Salvation, in & thro' Him, ſhall be *ſaved*. This Faith in Chriſt, is abſolutely neceſſary to *Salvation*; that Salvation may be received in *that Way*, in which God hath deſigned to give it, & in which he hath declared that he will beſtow it. *Faith*, is not the meritorious *Cauſe* of Salvation; it is not a *full Hand*, that brings its *own Money* in it, to *buy* Salvation. But it is abſolutely *neceſſary* to Salvation, as it is that *Grace*, which is appointed of God to *receive* Salvation; as it is an *empty Hand*, that opens *wide*, to receive the Whole of God's Salvation in Chriſt, as his *Free Gift*. And tho' ſaving Faith, don't bring a *Mite* of its *own Worth*, to procure Salvation; & in that reſpect is an empty Hand; yet in another View, it is a *full Hand*, that brings all the *Fulneſs* of Chriſt's infinite Merit, & preſents it to God, for the Soul's Salvation, entirely by his free Grace, in *that Way*, which is perfectly conſiſtent with his ſtrict Juſtice, his eternal Truth, & flaming Holineſs.—Thoſe who were guilty of Sin under the Legal Diſpenſation, in order to Forgiveneſs, were to *bring* their Offering to the Prieſt, *that Offering* which God had *appointed*, to be offered unto *Him*, for *Them*; and thoſe who bro't the Offering, were to lay their *Hand* upon the *Head* of the Sacrifice. By

which they confeſſed, that by their *Sin*, they had deſerved *Death*, to be ſacrificed to the avenging Juſtice of God, in the Fire of his Wrath forever, as that Creature was to be ſacrificed upon the Alter; & likewiſe, that they humbly & thankfully *accepted* of the Sacrifice which God had *provided*, to be offered up for *them*, as a Type of *Chriſt*, who was to be offered up to GOD, as a *Sacrifice for Sins*, in the Room & Stead of *Sinners*, in the *Fulneſs of Time*: Upon which, God *accepted* the Offering they bro't, to make an *Attonement* for them. And thus Now, Every poor Sinner that would be ſaved, muſt *bring* his Offering to Chriſt, the *great High Prieſt* over the Houſe of God, even *that Offering* which God hath appointed, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World:" Who was *once offered up for Sinners*, in the *Room & Stead* of all thoſe that ſhall be *ſaved*; to be preſented unto GOD, for *Him*. And the Soul by Faith muſt lay his *Hand* upon the *Head* of the great Sacrifice; & thereby confeſs his *Sin*, that he has deſerved to *die*, but that as God has given his own Son to Death, for the Life of Sinners, he humbly & thankfully *accepts* the Sacrifice of *God's* Proviſion, & preſents it to *Him*, for his *own* Salvation. Upon which, God, according to the Declaration of Grace in his Goſpel-Word, will *accept* his Offering, for *Him*, will *accept* his Son's Satisfaction, bro't by *Faith*, as an *Attonement* for his Guilt. For, "HIM hath God ſet forth as a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood: To declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt thro' the Forbearance of God; That he might be juſt, & the Juſtifier of Him that believeth in JESUS." For every Soul that ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt, has, & muſt have, *that Faith* given it, that makes the Soul *willing*, to be entirely *beholden* to Chriſt's infinite Satisfaction, for all its Peace & Pardon; to his perfect Righteouſneſs, for all its Acceptance with God; to his infinite Fulneſs, for the Supply of all its Emptineſs; & in a Word, To receive the Saviour *wholly*, for the *Whole* of its Salvation, of the freeſt Grace, to God's eternal Praiſe.—And as Chriſt the great Saviour, in all his infinite Fulneſs, is the *only Way*, that God's infinite Wiſdom contrived & ordained, for the Salvation of Sinners, in which *alone* they could be ſaved,

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to the Glory of all his Divine Perfections, which muſt harmonize in a Sinner's Salvation: So the Souls that are *not* willing to accept of Chriſt in all his infinite Fulneſs, as God's Way of Salvation, can have *no Salvation.* For, *There is no other Name*, Perſon, nor Thing, *given under Heaven among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*—And as thoſe happy Souls, who like, & approve of Chriſt, as God's Salvation, whoſe Hearts are pleaſed with him, & cleave unto him, or are *willing* to accept a *whole Chriſt*, for the *Whole of their Salvation*; have *ſaving Faith* given them, or *that Faith*, unto which the *Salvation of the Soul* is annexed, by the Goſpel Promiſe: So they ſhall aſſuredly be *ſaved in the* LORD *with an everlaſting Salvation.* Inaſmuch as they are of one Mind with *God*, about the *Saviour*, & are willing to accept of HIM in every *Reſpect*, & for every *End*, for which God hath *revealed him.* For as Chriſt is given of God to be thus *received*: So every Soul that is thus willing to *receive him*; ſhall moſt certainly be *ſaved by him*; according to the infinite *Grace*, of that faithful *Promiſe*, which is given to every Believer in Chriſt, by a *God that cannot lie.*—And when Souls are thus enabled to *bow to*, & *cloſe with Chriſt*, & thus *believing in him*, have the *Promiſe of Salvation* by him: *Then*, & not *till* then, it is their Duty, for God's Honour & their own Joy, *To believe that they ſhall be ſaved.*—And if Souls are *not* thus willing to receive Chriſt, as God's Salvation, continuing thus; O how *juſt* will be their Damnation!

Conſider then, Dear Souls, if you *reject* the Saviour, & *neglect* the Goſpel Call to believe in him: You will thereby *judge yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting Life*: And this aggravated Sin, added to all the reſt, if you continue in it, will bind all your Sins upon you *forever*, & ſink you deep into *eternal Death.*—Indeed, if you are not willing *now*, to receive Chriſt as your Life, no Man knows, but God *may* thus open your Heart, before you ſleep the Sleep of Death. For it is God's Promiſe to Chriſt, "That his People ſhall be willing, in the Day of his Power." But if you never feel that Day of Power, you muſt moſt certainly periſh forever.—And while God calls you *To-Day*, to hear his Voice; if you ſay, *To-morrow*,

at ſome other Time, or at the Time of Death, *I will cry for Mercy*; God may juſtly cut off your Life *ſuddenly*, before you ſee another Day, & ſend you into a miſerable Eternity. *To-Day* then, *if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* You have trifled away your Time, too much already, you are juſt about to drop into a vaſt Eternity, O delay no longer, leſt you periſh forever.——But,

Again. Are there any of you that ſee your Miſery as Sinners, chief Sinners; that ſee the Excellency of Chriſt, as the only & allſufficient Saviour; that believe he is able to ſave you, & that have a Deſire to be ſaved by him; & yet are afraid that Chriſt is not *willing to ſave you*; becauſe of the Greatneſs, the Multitude, & the Aggravations of your Sins, together with your Continuance therein, even to old Age? If there are any ſuch Souls, that may read theſe Lines, I would ſay to them, as *Philip* to *Nathaniel*, "Come & ſee!" Come, *try* the Saviour's Grace, Dear Souls, Venture *in* to King JESUS, with Ropes, as it were, about your Necks, confeſs before him all your Sins freely, tell him that you have deſerved to die eternally; & intreat him to ſave you of his free, rich, & never-failing Mercy. And you ſhall find him faithful to his precious Promiſe; "And him that cometh to ME, I will in no wiſe caſt out."

No, Dear Souls, tho' the Guilt of your Sin, in your firſt Father *Adam*, call'd for your eternal Death; tho' your Sin of Nature & Practice, of Heart, Lip & Life, your innumerable perſonal Tranſgreſſions, cry aloud for Vengeance; tho' your Sins againſt God's Law, & againſt his Goſpel, have reached up to Heaven in their Guilt, & threaten to ſink you down to Hell with their Weight; & tho' your Sins have been exceedingly aggravated, & many of them may have been committed againſt Light & Knowledge, againſt Convictions of Conſcience, & againſt the Calls of God in his Word, by his Miniſters, & by his Providences to return unto him; & tho' you have been like the *deaf Adder*, that *ſtops her Ears* at the *Voice of the Charmer*, and would not hear the Goſpel when you might, nor concern yourſelves earneſtly about Salvation, until your Life is almoſt finiſhed, & you are juſt ready to drop into

into everlasting Destruction: Yet *come to Christ instantly*; & He *will receive you graciously*, love you *freely*, & save you *eternally*. He *will in no wise cast you out*, for whatever you are, have been, or done against him; but receive you to the Glory of God. Come to Christ as you *can*, with all your Sins, with all your Fears & Dangers, with all your Wants & Weaknesses; & the Saviour's Bowels will *yern* upon you as miserable Sinners, & *wide* he will open his Heart & Arms, to receive, embrace, & save you *forever*. And lo, God, for Christ's Sake, will forgive all your numberless Sins, & remember them against you no more; Tho' they be *red* like *Crimson*, & as *Scarlet*, they shall be made, in the virtue of Christ's attoning Blood, & of God's forgiving Love, as *white* as *Snow* & as *Wool*. The Lord will have *Compassion* on you; He will *subdue* your Iniquities, as well as cast *all your Sins* into the Depths of the Sea. He will deliver you from the *Power of Darkness*, from the Dominion of Sin, & the Government of Satan, & translate you into the *Kingdom of his Dear Son*. He will give you his *Holy Spirit*, to sanctify your Hearts, & to make you meet for the Enjoyment & Service of God here, & for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light hereafter. You shall *receive* of Christ's *Fulness*, & *Grace for Grace*. Your *Strength* against Corruptions & Temptations, & for Divine Service, as well as your *Righteousness* for Acceptance, you shall see & say, They are both in Him. You shall be saved in the Lord, with an *everlasting Salvation*, & shall not be ashamed nor confounded *World without End*. Come then, come to Christ "To-Day, after so long a Time, as it is said, To-Day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts:" And trust your Souls for all Salvation, in the Almighty Saviour's Hands; & you shall find him as *willing*, as he is *able to save*, & that from his infinite Ability, & infinite Willingness, as in *Office to save*, He *will save you to the uttermost*: Believing in Christ, looking to him, venturing upon him, & trusting in him, altho' it be at the *Close* of your *Time*, you shall *not perish*; but have *everlasting Life*; you shall not sink into the endless Misery of Hell; but be rais'd by God's free Grace, to the Glory of Heaven, to

enjoy with Christ, with Saints & Angels, a *bleſt Eternity!*—But to cloſe with a Word,

Secondly, Unto You, who *Believe in* JESUS.—And perhaps ſome of you may ſay,

Object. I believe that Chriſt is able to ſave me, I believe he is willing to ſave *Sinners*, even all thoſe that believe in him, & I have ſome Hope at Times that he will ſave *me*: But as I have not *Aſſurance of my Intereſt in Chriſt*, I am afraid that I *don't believe truly*; & ſo, that I ſhall *not be ſaved eternally*.

Anſw. I have ſaid already, That the Aſſurance-Act of Faith, is not the *firſt* Act of Faith, which is required of the Heart, in order to Salvation; but the Faith of a Sinner's Submiſſion to the Saviour, for his own Salvation. Now then, let me ſay, to any Soul that may thus object: If thou ſeeſt thyſelf to be utterly undone by Sin, to be utterly unable to help or ſave thyſelf, by the Works of thy own Hands, if thou ſeeſt the infinite Allſufficiency of Chriſt, to ſave Sinners to the uttermoſt, & if this JESUS, appears every way *ſuitable* to thy Caſe, & is *deſirable* to thy Heart; or if thou art *willing* to accept a whole Chriſt, & the Whole of his Salvation, for thy own Salvation: Thou *art* a true Believer in Chriſt, & *ſhalt* aſſuredly be ſaved by him, tho' thou haſt *not*, at preſent, Aſſurance of thy Intereſt in him: Any otherwiſe than in the *Promiſe*, which aſſures Believers of their Intereſt in Chriſt, & Salvation by him. And unto this, thou ſhouldeſt, & ſhalt, in the Lord's Time, *Set to thy Seal*, That *God is true*: By believing that thou ſhalt be ſaved, or that it ſhall be to thee, as God hath ſaid.

For as there is not any one *Promiſe* in God's Book, that aſſures any one *Perſon* of his Salvation by Chriſt, who is *not* willing to be beholden to HIM, as a complete Saviour, for the Whole of his Salvation: So the *Aſſurance-Act of Faith*, as to Intereſt in Chriſt, is not the *firſt* Act of Faith, that is *required*. Nor can it be *put forth*, as Faith & the Promiſe, mutually reſpect each other, until the Promiſe of Salvation, is given to *that Perſon*, who *yields* the Obedience of Faith *called for*, in Submiſſion to the Saviour, in Bowing, Looking, Coming unto Chriſt, for the Whole of his Salvation, & for the Soul's own Sal-

Salvation by him.—This Faith of Submiſſion to the Saviour, muſt needs be *firſt*, in order of *Nature*, even in thoſe Perſons who have Aſſurance of Intereſt in Chriſt, given them as it were at *once*; as there is here & there one, that the Lord thus favours. Whence ſuch Perſons are apt to date the Time of their *Believing in Chriſt*, at the Time of their being *aſſured of their Intereſt in him*, & to think, that *Aſſurance*, was their *firſt* Act of Faith. But if ſuch Perſons reflect on their own Experience, they will find, That *previous* to their Aſſurance of Intereſt in Chriſt, they had a Conviction of Sin & Miſery without him, of the abſolute Neceſſity of Chriſt, as the only Remedy, a Revelation of the Saviour's Excellency, Ability & Willingneſs to ſave Sinners; & that from hence, beholding Chriſt, as every way ſuitable to their Caſe, he became the *Deſire* of their Hearts: Or, that their Hearts, were entirely *willing*, to receive a whole Chriſt, & the Whole of his Salvation; & likewiſe to give up themſelves unto Him, by an entire Dedication. And if ſo: This was their Faith of *Submiſſion to Chriſt*; which has the *Promiſe* of Salvation by him: And as a Conſequence hereof, their Faith of *Aſſurance of Intereſt in Chriſt*, was given them by, & according to the Promiſe. The former was, & muſt needs be *firſt*, in order of *Nature*, however ſpeedily the latter might *follow*, in order of *Time*.—But whether Aſſurance of Intereſt in Chriſt, is given to Believers ſooner or later, it is the Faith of Submiſſion to the Saviour, that has the Promiſe of Salvation by him. And when any Soul is thus *willing* to receive Chriſt, & its Willingneſs to receive him, is in ſome Degree, its *Heart Reception* of him: Then, as all the Promiſes with one united Voice, aſſure that Soul, of its *Salvation by* Jesus; it may & ought to believe its *Intereſt in him*, & *eternal Happineſs*, by & thro' him. And the Soul *will do ſo*, more or leſs, juſt as the Holy Ghoſt is pleas'd to apply the Grace of the Promiſe, as it ſtands in God's Book, with more or leſs Evidence, when bro't to the Heart. But this Aſſurance-Act of Faith, tho' it belongs *to*, & ſprings *from*, that Principle of ſaving Faith, which is the *ſame* in all true Believers; Yet is it not alike *exerciſed* by all, nor by any Believer at all Times: Nor is this that *firſt Act of Faith*,

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to which the *Salvation of the Soul*, is annexed. But it is the Act of Submiſſion to the Saviour, or Bowing, Looking, Coming to him, & Relying upon him, as the only & allſufficient Saviour, for the Whole of his Salvation, that is required of periſhing Sinners; & that has the Promiſe of Salvation by JESUS. As Act. xvi. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, & thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Believing, is here the *Antecedent*, & Salvation the *Conſequent*: Believing is the required *Duty*, & Salvation the promiſed *Privilege*. And the Faith call'd for, is Believing on JESUS, as the only & allſufficient Saviour; on Him, as CHRIST, as the Anointed of the Father, who is Authorized of God, to ſave Sinners; & on Him, Jeſus Chriſt, as LORD, as having a ſovereign *Right*, to grant Salvation to the chief of Sinners; & alſo a ſovereign *Right*, to rule for, in, & over, all thoſe whom HE ſaves. And it is Believing *on* him, under theſe Conſiderations, that is required; or it is the Soul's Bowing to the Saviour revealed, Looking to him for the Whole of Salvation, & Relying upon him for its own Salvation, that is called for. This is *that* Believing in Chriſt, which has the Promiſe of Salvation annexed to it. To every ſuch Believer, the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, in the written Word, *Thou ſhalt be ſaved.* And when the Soul is enabled to put forth any of theſe Acts of Faith on Chriſt, which reſpect the Sinner's Submiſſion to the Saviour, then the Holy Ghoſt as the Comforter, doth & will apply the Grace of the Promiſe to the Heart, in his own Time, to perſwade the Soul, more or leſs, That it *ſhall be ſaved*; becauſe GOD, that is *able to perform it*, GOD, *that cannot lie*, hath *ſaid it*: Concerning every Soul, that is thus *willing* to be ſaved by JESUS.

Unto *You* then, that *believe*, unto whom *Chriſt is precious*, whether you have, or have not, a full *Aſſurance of Intereſt in him*, yet unto you, as Believers, who perhaps may have known the Lord from your Youth, & are now arrived to old Age: Permit me to offer a Word, & to intreat you humbly, to improve your *preſent Time*, for a *bleſt Eternity*. I know the Hazards of Eternity are over, with reſpect to *You*, that your Perſons are ſafe in Chriſt, for a glorious Eternity, & that you are *habitually*

ready

ready for your Lord's Coming, whenever he is pleaſed to ſend the Meſſenger Death, to fetch you Home to his Boſom; & under *that Head*, I ſhall not addreſs you: But ſuffer me to give, both Myſelf & You, a Word of Exhortation, as to *actual Readineſs*; that whenever our *Lord knocketh*, by Affliction unto Death, we may *open to him immediately*, & enter with him to the *Marriage*, in a *bleſt Eternity*. And let us remember, That *Time*, well improved, is of vaſt Importance, with reſpect to *Eternity*; with reſpect to the Glory of God by us in this World, which will be to his eternal Praiſe, & unto our eternal Joy; & with reſpect to our Glory with him, in the World to come, or with reſpect to thoſe additional Honours & Glories of that future Crown, with which the Prince of Grace, will reward his Servants according to their Works. Indeed when Perſons are got into the evil Day of old Age, their *Doing Time* for GOD, is juſt almoſt over, the Shadows of the Evening of Life are ſtretched out upon them, & the Night of Death approacheth, in which no Man can work, nor do any more for GOD, in *this World*. But yet, dear Souls, when the Evening is come, & we have but *little Time* left, & *becauſe* we have but little, & while we *have* a little, let us labour to do as *much Service* for GOD in it, as we poſſibly *can*.

And let us rejoyce to think, That when all our Time is gone, & we can ſerve the Lord no more here, we ſhall ſerve him perfectly & eternally *hereafter*. Without this hateful, God-diſhonouring, this lothſom, Soul-grieving Thing, SIN; without Weakneſs & Wearineſs, without Diſtance & Darkneſs, Deadneſs & Coldneſs, Diſtraction, Interruption, or Ceſſation: To an infinite Space, of eternal Duration! A believing Thought of this, hath been to *me*, an endearing, enhanſing Thought of Heaven's Bliſs! Methinks the Glory of the upper World, would not be to me ſo ineffably great & ſweet, if there I was not to *ſerve*, as well as to *enjoy* my GOD, to *glorify* him perfectly, as well as to be *glorify'd* with him eternally. And I believe all the Saints are of the ſame Mind. All that love GOD for HIMSELF, for his own infinite Excellencies, & his Works of Wonder, for their native

to which the *Salvation of the Soul*, is annexed. But it is the Act of Submiſſion to the Saviour, or Bowing, Looking, Coming to him, & Relying upon him, as the only & allſufficient Saviour, for the Whole of his Salvation, that is required of periſhing Sinners; & that has the Promiſe of Salvation by JESUS. As Act. xvi. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, & thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Believing, is here the *Antecedent*, & Salvation the *Conſequent*: Believing is the required *Duty*, & Salvation the promiſed *Privilege*. And the Faith call'd for, is Believing on JESUS, as the only & allſufficient Saviour; on Him, as CHRIST, as the Anointed of the Father, who is Authorized of God, to ſave Sinners; & on Him, Jeſus Chriſt, as LORD, as having a ſovereign *Right*, to grant Salvation to the chief of Sinners; & alſo a ſovereign *Right*, to rule for, in, & over, all thoſe whom HE ſaves. And it is Believing *on* him, under theſe Conſiderations, that is required; or it is the Soul's Bowing to the Saviour revealed, Looking to him for the Whole of Salvation, & Relying upon him for its own Salvation, that is called for. This is *that* Believing in Chriſt, which has the Promiſe of Salvation annexed to it. To every ſuch Believer, the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, in the written Word, *Thou ſhalt be ſaved*. And when the Soul is enabled to put forth any of theſe Acts of Faith on Chriſt, which reſpect the Sinner's Submiſſion to the Saviour, then the Holy Ghoſt as the Comforter, doth & will apply the Grace of the Promiſe to the Heart, in his own Time, to perſwade the Soul, more or leſs, That it *ſhall be ſaved*; becauſe GOD, that is *able to perform it*, GOD, *that cannot lie*, hath *ſaid it*: Concerning every Soul, that is thus *willing* to be ſaved by JESUS.

Unto *You* then, that *believe*, unto whom *Chriſt is precious*, whether you have, or have not, a full *Aſſurance of Intereſt in him*, yet unto you, as Believers, who perhaps may have known the Lord from your Youth, & are now arrived to old Age: Permit me to offer a Word, & to intreat you humbly, to improve your *preſent Time*, for a *bleſt Eternity*. I know the Hazards of Eternity are over, with reſpect to *You*, that your Perſons are ſafe in Chriſt, for a glorious Eternity, & that you are *habitually ready*

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Glories; as well as for his infinite Grace to his People, & to them; & that love his Service, as it relates to his Praiſe, as well as to their own Joy: All theſe happy Souls, from their Delight in Holineſs, eſteem the Service of God in the upper World, an eſſential Part of Heaven's Happineſs. And when ſuch a bright Ray of future Glory, darts upon the Mind, enkindled as it were with heavenly Fire, it wings the Heart with Deſire, to be at Home *with Chriſt*, which is *far, far better!* For, "There ſhall be no more Curſe: in the new *Jeruſalem*, (in the Church triumphant) but the Throne of GOD & of the LAMB ſhall be in it, (for Enjoyment & Employment) & his Servants ſhall ſerve him. (Now they would, but then they ſhall.) And they ſhall ſee his Face, (without a Vail between him & them) & his Name ſhall be in their Foreheads. (They ſhall be ſo perfectly changed into his Image, & conſtantly employ'd in his Service, that bearing upon them ſuch a ſhining Impreſs of Divine Glory, it ſhall be openly known to all, which Way ſoever they turn or look, whoſe Servants they are, & in whoſe Service they appear.) And there ſhall be no Night there, & they need no Candle, neither Light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them Light: And they ſhall reign forever & ever." O deſirable State! *Lord make us meet, for this our bleſt Inheritance in Light!* But, to return from this Digreſſion:

And while we yet abide in this dark World, & before the Darkneſs of Death overtakes us, let us do our utmoſt thro' Divine Aſſiſtance, as the Children of Light, to glorify the Father of Lights, in all the various Works he calls us to reſpectively & particularly, as *our Generation-Work*. Let us do it earneſtly, & humbly, patiently & thankfully (for ſome kind of Suffering, will attend us in Doing, as well as Joy, in Obeying) & let us labour to finiſh the Work we are called to, cheerfully & conſtantly. And I might add, If we can do but *little*, let us endeavour to *love much*, in a little, to give God a *great Heart*, an enlarged Soul, in every *little Service*, to give him *Ourſelves entirely*, in every *Mite of Duty*; & lamenting that we can ſerve him ſo *poorly*, let us tell him *freely*, "That

if

if we had ten thouſand Selves, by the Aſſiſtance of his Grace, they ſhould all be for ever devoted to his Glory." For ſuch weak Attempts of Service, are acceptable to God thro' Jeſus Chriſt. And ſuch liſping Language of filial Duty, is well-pleaſing to HIM, the Father of Mercies. For tho' we have innumerable Faults, which attend us in our beſt Works, yet ſuch is the infinite Grace of God our Father, in & thro' Chriſt; that HE will *ſpare us*, as a *Man ſpareth his own Son that ſerveth him.* He will forgive all our Sins, & accept, & record, all our Services, for a full Reward. And ſo much, will our great Lord ſay, in the great Day of his Appearing, by way of Commendation before Men & Angels, of all thoſe little Mites of Duty, which we have aim'd at in Love to his Glory; that will ſtrike us with joyful Wonder at his infinite Grace, in thus regarding our worthleſs Services: And make us ſay, to his endleſs Praiſe, while ſinking deeply in Humility, "Lord, *When*, did we ever do any Thing, that was worthy of thy Notice." Upon which our Lord will ſay, "Inaſmuch as ye did it to the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye did it unto ME. Well done, good & faithful Servants: Enter ye into the Joy of your Lord." Which boundleſs Grace, of the Lord our Royal Maſter, ſhould put his Servants upon the full Stretch in his Service.—Indeed Souls that love Chriſt much, do much deſire to be with him. But, Alas! *Who* loves much? Our higheſt Strains of Duty, fall ſo far *beneath*, his infinite Worth & Glory! But yet in his infinite Grace, he will ſay of ſome, *They love much:* And theſe (at Times,) do much deſire to be *with him* where *he is*, to ſee & ſerve him in the *Heights of Glory:* Yet this may excite them to be willing to *ſtay* in this low Land, during Divine Pleaſure: In that while the Lord continues his Servants on the *Earth*, they have ſome Work to do for his Glory, which cannot be done in *Heaven.* As bearing Witneſs for him, & ſhewing forth his Praiſe, in the midſt of a crooked & perverſe Generation. Speaking of him & for him to periſhing Sinners, & a Word in Seaſon to tried Saints, Filling up the Duties of every Relation, in every Station & Condition, with Prayers & Praiſes for the Mercies enjoy'd or ſought, in the preſent

State, & for the Coming of his Kingdom, & the Spread of his Glory over all the Earth: &c. For this our preſent *Work*, then, let us improve our preſent *Time*.

And if there is any piece of Service in *particular*, that any Servant of Chriſt hath been called to do for his *Royal Maſter*, & that lies upon his Heart & Hands to perform, before he goes hence & is ſeen no more: Let him in a particular manner *watch*, for the firſt Opportunity to *engage* in that Service, & let him attempt his Duty without Delay. And let him not hearken to any ſuch Suggeſtion from Satan, or his own ſlothful Spirit, "That he is not fit to engage in the Work; & that if he delays longer, he may do it better." For if any of the Lord's Servants yield to ſuch Suggeſtions, they will thereby greatly ſin againſt him; & grieve his Holy Spirit, & he may withdraw from them, & ſo ſeverely chaſtiſe them, that they may have neither Heart, Head, Hand, nor Time, allow'd them for that Service *To-morrow*, which they ſinfully neglect, when called to it *To-Day*. Depending therefore on the Lord's Aſſiſtance, let his Servants engage inſtantly in their Duty, and they ſhall find his Strength made perfect in their Weakneſs, & his Grace ſufficient for its Performance. At leaſt, if they die before the Work is finiſht, they ſhall not fail of the Lord's gracious Acceptance, of their willing Mind, if to perform, ſhould not be in the Power of their Hand. Yea, & their Reward hereafter, ſhall be, not only according to what they actually *did*, but alſo according to what they *wou'd* have done, & *endeavoured* to do here.

Let Saints then in old Age, ariſe to greater Diligence in Divine Service: And when we can *do no more for Chriſt*, let us *ſuffer for him*; when in an active Courſe of Obedience, according to the utmoſt of our Time & Strength, we have *done* the Will of God; let us meekly & patiently *ſuffer his Will*.

For when Doing is *over*, ſuffering *comes on*: And the *greateſt* Trials of the Saints, are frequently at the *laſt*. Wonder not then, Dear Souls, if your greateſt Storms, & rougheſt Sea, ſhould meet you juſt before you enter your heavenly Harbour: But asking the Aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, ſet yourſelves in good earneſt

neſt to *ſuffering Work*, compoſe your Spirits to an humble Submiſſion to the Will of God, & a ſweet Acquieſcence with his good Pleaſure, whatſoever it be concerning you. I know it is the *Lord* that muſt work in you both to will & to do of his *good Pleaſure*, or *you* can do Nothing that is *well-pleaſing* in his Sight. But ſuffer a Word of Exhortation unto Duty, & addreſs the Throne of Grace in your Neceſſity; & you ſhall find Mercy, & Grace to help you in Time of Need. — And conſider, The *Nature* of your Sufferings: That they are not *Penal*, but *Filial*, that they come not to You as a *Curſe*, but flow from God's Love, thro' Chriſt's Blood, as a *Bleſſing*, that they are *Yours*, & a Part of that Time-Portion, which was wiſely & graciouſly ordained for *You*. That your Sufferings are but *ſhort*, for a *Moment*; & that by *Patient Enduring*, under momentary Suffering, you may give that Glory to God on *Earth*, which you cannot give him in Heaven, as there, Sufferings will have no Place. Conſider likewiſe, That you are not, ſhall not be left alone in Sufferings; but *underneath* there *are* & ſhall be *The Everlaſting Arms*; for Support, & for Comfort, the *Lord* will be with you in Trouble, & bring you *out* with Advantage. And think on the great *Ends* of your Sufferings: viz. Your being an *Example* of ſuffering Affliction, & of Patience, unto *others*: The more abundant *Glory of God* by *you*, in the *preſent Time*: Your greater Conformity to *Chriſt in Grace*: And your more weighty Crown of *eternal Glory*.

Having *Reſpect*, then, to the *Recompenſe of the Reward*, under every of theſe Conſiderations, ſet yourſelves to *endure Afflictions with the People of God*, in a *Chriſt-like Spirit*, as the true *Followers* of the meek & lowly JESUS; who deny'd Himſelf, took up his Croſs, & ſought the Glory of his Father, & the Good of his People in all his Sufferings, to the very *End of his Life*.—And when called to *Reſign his Soul* into his *Father's Hands*; He *bowed his Head*, in the greateſt Submiſſion to, Acquieſcence with, & Complacence in, the Will of God, & *gave up the Ghoſt*.—Oh may we be enabled, not only to *live*, but alſo to *die*, after the bright *Example* of our great *Lord & Maſter!*—And when he had finiſhed all the Work that his Father gave him to do, in his active & paſſive Obedience, by which he glorify'd God upon the *Earth*;

God

God the Father, glorified his Son in Heaven; ſet him at his *own Right Hand, far above all Principality & Power, & gave him to be Head over all Things to the Church; which is his Body, the Fulneſs of* HIM, *who filleth all in all.*—And as God the Father glorified the ſuffering *Head*, & when his Sufferings were *finiſhed*, received him up to *Glory:* So he will glorify the ſuffering *Members*, in their Meaſure; when their Sufferings *end*, their Glory ſhall *begin.* And the *more* Sufferings they endure in the preſent Time, if they behave meekly, humbly, & cheerfully under them to God's Honour, the *greater* ſhall be their eternal Joy, & the *brighter* their Crown of immortal Glory.

Whereas, if we are impatient, unholy, & unthankful under Afflictions, we ſhall *loſe* our Opportunity of glorifying God thereby, & that preſent Peace & Joy, which patient Chriſtians have in ſuffering, & likewiſe that Praiſe, Honour & Glory, which thoſe ſhall have in the Day of Chriſt, who behave *well* under the Croſs.

To our *Work* then, Dear Souls, let us addreſs ourſelves, we that are almoſt got to the Cloſe of Life: To *do* that little Work which remains to be done by us for God on Earth; & then to *ſuffer* cheerfully, in Hope of Heaven's approaching Glory. Let us look upon ourſelves as *Strangers & Pilgrims* here, & moſt earneſtly, in every Path of Duty, let us *ſeek a better Country.* That having our *Lamps trimmed*, & our *Lights burning*, & we *ourſelves watching* for our *Lord's coming*, we may be *actually ready* to meet him, & *open at his Call immediately.* "That Chriſt may be magnified in our Bodies, whether it be by Life, or by Death." For if by Grace, we are thus enabled to improve our *preſent Time*; the happy Fruit of it will be, *The Joy & Glory of God*, in & by *us*, & *our Joy & Glory*, in & with *him*, to a *bleſt Eternity!*—Now, *To the Father of Mercies & the God of all Grace in Chriſt*, I commit what I have *hinted*, to be bleſt to the *Ends deſired*, viz. *The Glory of God*, & *the God of Souls:* And am very affectionately,

My Dear Friends,

Your willing humble Servant in Chriſt, &c.

LETTER V. To *All Thirſty Souls*: To invite them *to come to Chriſt*, and to *take the Water of Life*; which he hath promiſed to give them *freely*.

Dear Souls,

IN the foregoing Letters, I addreſſed you under four Sorts, viz. As *Parents*, *Children*, *Young & Middle-aged*, & as *Aged*: And now I wou'd caſt you *all together*, in whatever Relation, Station, Condition, or Time of Life, theſe Lines may find you. Whether Young or Old, Rich or Poor, High or Low: I intreat you *all*, to attend earneſtly to the *Lord's Voice* in his *Word*:

Rev. xxii. 17. *And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.*

Theſe Words are the Words of JESUS, the anointed Saviour, the Almighty, & All-gracious Saviour, of periſhing Sinners. As ver. 16. I JESUS *have ſent mine Angel to teſtify unto you theſe Things in the Churches. I am the Root & the Offſpring of* David, & *the bright & Morning Star.* Which is as if our Lord ſhould ſay, "Hearken unto ME, all ye that deſire to be eternally happy; I am the great Saviour of loſt Sinners, who alone can ſave you from preſent & eternal Miſery, & bleſs you with true Happineſs here, & with eternal Life hereafter. Behold ME, in my Divinity, in my Humanity, as God, as Man, two Natures, in one Perſon, in all my Perſonal, & Mediatorial Glory: As the *Root*, & the *Offſpring* of *David*, as *David*'s Lord, & *Son*: Behold ME, as once humbled for Sinners unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs. Behold ME, as being once delivered for your Offences, & raiſed again for your Juſtification. Behold ME, as aſcended into Glory, & ſet at God's Right Hand, not as a ſingle Perſon, for myſelf alone, but as the Repreſentative of my People, & as the Forerunner of an innumerable Multitude of Sinners that are to follow, as having taken Poſſeſſion of Glory for you, as your Head, & in your Name & Room, as being entred into Heaven itſelf for you, to prepare Places for you, in my Father's Houſe,

that

that you may live forever with ME, in the bright Manſions of eternal Bliſs. Behold in my Exaltation, a forerunning Diſplay, of a brighter approaching Glory, of a Day, that ſhall have no Night, in which *you* ſhall ſhine, & reign with ME, for ever & ever. Behold ME, for *You*, as the *bright*, & *Morning Star*. As the firſt Star in Glory, & the Earneſt of Glory's approaching, endleſs *Day*." And having teſtify'd theſe Things in the Churches, to raiſe the Attention of Sinners, & to enkindle a Deſire in their Souls after eternal Glory, in & with the Saviour: Then comes in our Lord's free Invitation, by his Spirit & Bride, by his Spirit in his Word, & as diſpenſed in his Church, & by every one that heareth this joyful Goſpel Sound, who is in his Meaſure, to join with the inviting Saviour: As ver. 17. *And the Spirit & the Bride, ſay, Come: And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* This latter Clauſe of the Verſe, is the Saviour's own Voice; to enforce that of his Servants; by which he ſpeaks his Heart, & moſt freely & ſweetly invites thirſty Souls, to come to Himſelf, & partake of all his Grace, for their full Supply, to their preſent Joy & eternal Glory: They are the Lord the Saviour's Royal Grant of all Salvation, to periſhing Sinners, that come to Him for Life, & his gracious Promiſe to give it freely, unto Whoſoever will. *And let Him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.*

Now then, Dear Souls, whoever you are that read theſe Lines: Conſider, That as the Soul of Man, is an *immortal Spirit*, which in its firſt Make, in *Adam*, our natural & federal Head, was formed with a Capacity to *Enjoy*, & *Glorify* GOD, & had then an *Appetite*, which was ſuited to that glorious *Feaſt*, which is to be had in God, & in his Service: So this capacious Spirit of Man, can never find an adequate Happineſs, ſuited to its *ſpiritual Nature*, in any Thing *below* GOD, who is an *infinite Spirit*, nor a Bliſs ſuited to its *Immortality*, in any Thing ſhort of GOD's *Eternity*. And tho' by our woful Fall from GOD, in *Adam*'s firſt Sin, & the total Depravity of our Natnre thereupon, this Appetite of the Soul, after ſpiritual & eternal Bliſs, which was, & I humbly think,

think, is, connatural to it, as an immortal Spirit; is ſo awfully *deluded*, that it ſeeks Happineſs in the Creatures & Things of *Time*, where it is not to be *had*, & ſo lamentably *vitiated*, that it puts *Bitter* for Sweet, & *Sweet* for Bitter, that it loaths *God*, & loves *Sin*; which Creature-Emptineſs, gives it preſent Diſappointment, & great Wickedneſs, eternal Torment: (As Death, is the Deſert of Sin, in all, & will be the Event of it, to all that die in Sin.) Yet *thirſting ſtill*, for Something to *ſatisfy the Heart*, the Heart pants continually, & hunted from *one Thing*, purſues *another*, thro' an endleſs Maze of *Vanity*, until (if Grace prevent not) the Soul that departs from *God*, ſinks into an *Eternity of Miſery*. And there the Wicked will ſuffer the Pain of *Loſs*, & the Pain of *Senſe*: in the Loſs of the *Favour of God*, which alone can give *Comfort* to an immortal Spirit; & in the Senſe of his *Wrath for Sin*, which to an eternal Duration, will *torment* the Spirit. And both theſe, together, will make the *Thirſt of Souls in Hell*, intolerable; & not one *Drop of Water*, one Drop of Comfort, ſhall be afforded forever, to *cool their Tongues*, when once *tormented in Hell-Flames*. Think of this, "You that forget GOD, leſt he tear you in Pieces, & there be none to deliver!" And think, Dear Souls, you that *thirſt* for Happineſs in the Creatures of *Time*, & the Pleaſures of *Sin*, what Vanity & Vexation you find in them at *preſent?* beſides the Danger they expoſe you to of *eternal Torment*. And think again, That this *Appetite* of your Souls after *Happineſs*, which I have hinted, is by Sin ſo totally vitiated, that you can never find the *Object* of ſatisfying Bliſs, but you will thereby be *expoſed* to the utmoſt Diſtreſs; if the God of all Grace, don't *create your Souls anew in Chriſt Jeſus:* If HE don't deliver you from the *Power of Darkneſs*, from the Dominion of Sin & Satan, & tranſlate you into the Kingdom of his Dear Son; if HE don't renew his Image in your Souls, & give you a *Chriſt-like Spirit*, & Temper of Mind, in *Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, & true Holineſs*. Seek the Lord therefore, That he will *crucify your inordinate Affection*, which deceives & vitiates your Souls *natural Appetite* after *Bliſs*, & threatens to ſink you deep, into Hell's Abyſs; & that

he will *quicken you by his Grace*, to a *new* & *ſpiritual Appetite*, an earneſt *Thirſt*, after thoſe *pure*, *thoſe living Pleaſures*, which proceed from the *Throne of* GOD & *of the* LAMB. And as our Lord has promiſed, "That the *Dead* ſhall *hear* the Voice of the *Son of God*: (in his Goſpel Word) And they that hear, ſhall *live*:" So,

Firſt. I would intreat *You*, poor Souls, who at preſent have only a *natural Thirſt* after *Happineſs*, to liſten earneſtly to the *Call of Goſpel Grace*. For unto you, the Lord ſays,

Iſa. lv. 1, 2, 3. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, & he that hath no Money; come ye, buy & eat, yea, come, buy Wine & Milk without Money, & without Price. Wherefore do ye ſpend Money for that which is not Bread? & your Labour for that which ſatisfieth not? hearken diligently unto* ME, *& eat ye that which is good, & let your Soul delight itſelf in Fatneſs. Incline your Ear, & come unto* ME: *hear, & your Soul ſhall live, & I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure Mercies of* David.

Here, Dear Souls, you are all invited to come & partake of the Goſpel Feaſt. Your *Attention* is call'd for, by the Lord's "*Ho*, viz. Liſten, give earneſt Heed to the Goſpel Sound. The Attention of you *all*, is likewiſe call'd for, *Every one that thirſteth*:" Not a Soul of you can ſay, where the Goſpel comes, That you were not call'd thereby to partake of its rich Proviſions. And O how ſweetly are you invited, "*Come ye to the Waters!* "You thirſty Souls, that pant after Happineſs, to fill "an empty Mind; come to the Waters of God's Free "Grace in Chriſt, where only & always, there is to be "found, a full, & Soul-ſatisfying Bliſs. *And he that hath* "*no Money*: Tho' you are as *poor*, as you are *needy*, as "empty of Deſert to buy Happineſs, as you are thirſty "after it: *Come ye, buy & eat, yea, come, buy Wine & Milk*, all ſpiritual Neceſſaries & Soul-Delights, *without Money, & without Price*: Never think to make "God amends by your own Righteouſneſs, for your "Sins, nor bring your own Promiſes & Reſolutions to "amend your Ways, as a Price in your Hands, to procure Salvation: but come, yea, come, in all your

"Ne-

" Neceſſity, to receive all freely. *Wherefore do ye ſpend*
" *Money for that which is not Bread? & your Labour for*
" *that which ſatisfieth not?* Why do you lay out yourſelves
" to the uttermoſt, in the Purſuit of worldly & ſinful
" Pleaſures, which are Huſks, & not Bread, for an im-
" mortal Mind? Why do you labour ſo earneſtly
" Night & Day, to catch Shadows, & graſp Vanity,
" which will expoſe your Souls to the utmoſt Miſery? Or,
" why do you labour to eſtabliſh your own Righteouſneſs,
" which before God, can never be to you a juſtifying
" Dreſs, which can never ſatisfy God's Law & Juſtice,
" nor yet your own Conſcience, but will expoſe you, for
" its Imperfection, to eternal Damnation? *Hearken di-*
" *ligently unto* ME: Unto ME the ſent *Saviour*, the on-
" ly Refuge of periſhing Sinners, & the Fountain of all
" their Bliſs. *And eat ye that which is good, & let your Soul*
" *delight itſelf in Fatneſs:* Come, feaſt upon the ſacri-
" ficed *Lamb of God*, which *taketh away the Sins of the*
" *World*, & let your Souls delight themſelves, in the
" Royal Dainties of the Goſpel Feaſt. *Incline your Ear,*
" *& come unto* ME: Bend the utmoſt Attention of your
" Souls, to my Invitation; & attempt your Duty, to come
" unto ME, who will in no wiſe caſt out the greateſt Sin-
" ner, that comes to ME, the mighty Saviour. *Hear, &*
" *your Soul ſhall live:* Hearken to my Voice, & obey my
" Call; & your *Souls*, your immortal *Spirits*, ſhall *live*;
" a Life of Juſtification, of Sanctification, of Conſola-
" tion, & Glorification. *And I will make an everlaſting*
" *Covenant with you, even the ſure Mercies of* David: I
" will not only ſupply all your Neceſſities richly & abun-
" dantly, but will do this alſo in a Covenant-Way, I
" will give Myſelf unto you, to be *your God*, & take
" you unto ME, to be *my People*; & that not preca-
" rioufly, to leave your Perſeverance in Grace, unto
" eternal Glory, at Uncertainty, but moſt *ſurely*, I will
" give you the *ſure Mercies* of *David*, of God's Cove-
" nant with ME, typed out by his Covenant with *David*,
" from whom God did not take away his Mercy, on
" account of his Sin, as he took it away from *Saul*, that
" was before him. I will make a Covenant with you,
" not for *Time* only, but for *Eternity*, that ſhall be as

" durable as it is ſtable, & ſtable, becauſe durable, an " *everlaſting Covenant!*"

Thus the Goſpel calls *Thirſty Sinners*, to the *Fountain of living Waters* in the great *Saviour*. And while *All* are thus invited, *Some*, being left to their own corrupt Wiſdom & rebellious Will, make *Excuſes*, & go *their Ways*: Upon which, the Lord of the Feaſt, being angry for their Sin, reſolves in his Wrath, That they *ſhall not taſte of his Supper*. But *others*, taught of God, & drawn by the Father, ſee their Neceſſity, their Miſery without Chriſt, his tranſcendent Excellency, & *athirſt for* HIM, *come in by Faith freely*, to partake of all his Grace *fully*, & are, & ſhall be bleſt, with *unſpeakable Joy*, & *eternal Glory*.

How is it then with *you*, that read theſe Lines, that hitherto have had but a natural Thirſt after Happineſs, where you will never find it? Have you *heard the Saviour's Voice?* Do you now begin to be *athirſt* for *his Grace?* Come then, *come & welcome to Jeſus Chriſt*, & He *will not caſt you out*, for whatever you have been, or done, but *receive* & *ſave you* to the *Glory of God*. Oh turn not away your Ear, ſlight not the Goſpel Call, nor diſobey it any longer, leſt you periſh forever! It is *neceſſary* that the *Word* of the *Goſpel*, ſhould thus be ſpoken unto *you*: As it muſt be for a *Witneſs* in *all Nations*, before the *End come*: Thoſe that *obey the Goſpel*, that *believe in Chriſt*, that come to him, for all ſpiritual & eternal *Life*, in & with HIM; ſhall be *ſaved*: But thoſe that *diſobey the Goſpel*, that believe *not*, that will not come to Chriſt, that they might have Life; ſhall be *damned*. Oh that the former, may be the happy Lot of all, & not the latter, the miſerable Portion of any, that read or hear theſe Lines! For this is a *faithful Saying*, & worthy of *all Acceptation*, (to be accepted of all Perſons, at all Times, & with all their Souls) " That Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, even the very Chief!"—Again,

Secondly. Let me intreat *You*, Dear Souls, that are *ſpiritually athirſt*, to liſten diligently to the *Saviour's Voice*. For unto you, He ſays,

And

"And let Him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely." The *Thirſt* here ſpoken of, appears to be athirſt after the *Water of Life:* And unto every Soul that is thus athirſt, our Lord ſaith, *Come*; come unto ME, who am the Fountain-Fulneſs of all Grace & Glory, & take your *Fill*, thro' Time & to Eternity. And to anſwer all Objections, that might ariſe in the Minds of Thoſe, that are ſpiritually athirſt, either from the Suggeſtions of Satan, or their own Unbelief, our Lord adds, *And Whoſoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* Here the compaſſionate Saviour, grants a full Liberty, to every Sinner that deſires HIM, & his Salvation, to take the Water of Life freely, to receive HIM, in all his infinite Fulneſs of Grace & Glory, to ſatisfy his Soul abundantly, & ſave it eternally.

Hence then, You that are *athirſt* for CHRIST, *come* to him: Be of *good Cheer*, ariſe, *he calleth you.* He calls you as it were by *Name.* Is *Chriſt* your Deſire, a *whole* Chriſt, & the *whole* of his Salvation, what your Hearts *pant* after? You, are the *Souls*, for whom Chriſt was *provided*, & with a full Chriſt, your Hearts ſhall be fully & eternally *ſatisfied.* You that have ſpiritual Appetites wrought in you, after Chriſt & his Grace, for *you*, are prepared the rich, Soul-ſatisfying Dainties of the Goſpel Feaſt: "A Feaſt of fat Things, of fat Things full of Marrow; a Feaſt of Wines, of Wines on the Lees, well refined," has God prepared for you, in his Dear Son. Are you *athirſt* for the *Water of Life*, for all Grace & Mercy, Holineſs & Glory, in & with *Chriſt?* Come then by Faith, & for yourſelves, receive all *freely.* Whoever you are, whether Young or Old, Male or Female, Rich or Poor, High or Low, if you are *athirſt for Chriſt*, you may *come to* HIM, & *welcome.* Whatever are your Sins & Fears, your Miſeries & Dangers, your Wants & Neceſſities, you may come to Chriſt *inſtantly*, & receive all Relief *freely.* "For in HIM dwelleth, all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." An infinite Fulneſs of all Grace & Mercy, of Life & Glory, dwells in Chriſt for *you*, who *ſee* your Neceſſity, & his tranſcendent Excellency, & *pant* after HIM moſt earneſtly, which ſhall be communicated for your full Supply, freely & abundantly.

For the Saviour ſaith to the chief of Sinners, *if any Man thirſt*; (let him be who, or what he will, let his Miſeries & Neceſſities be as great as may be, if he is athirſt for ME, & my Salvation:) *Let him come unto* ME, *& drink*, Joh. vii. 37. "Let him drink freely, let him drink abundantly, thro' Time, & to Eternity: He can never draw ME, the inexhauſtible Fountain of Life & Glory, *dry*; & to his full Joy, I will communicate to him *richly*." For, *He that believeth on* ME, *as the Scripture hath ſaid, out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water*, ver. 38. And, *I will give unto Him that is athirſt, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely*, Rev. xxii. 6.

What are your *Wants*, thirſty Souls? Do you want pardoning Mercy & juſtifying Righteouſneſs? Sanctifying & comforting Grace? Reſtoring & ſtrengthning Mercy? Perſevering Grace & eternal Glory? All theſe, in an infinite Abundance, are treaſured up in *Chriſt*, for *You* that are *athirſt*.—"HE that hath wrought you, for the Self-ſame Thing, is GOD!" If Chriſt had not been provided for you, you had not been thus prepared to receive *Him*, by thoſe earneſt Deſires, which are wrought in your Hearts after him.—For tho' there is a natural Appetite in the Soul of Man, after Happineſs, & it can never be happy in any Thing inferior to its Spiritual Nature; yet, in an unregenerate State, the Soul's Thirſt, is always after ſomething *below Chriſt*. And when ſuch Souls ſee or hear of *Chriſt*, in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel of Grace, or otherwiſe; they ſee *no Beauty in* HIM, that they ſhould *deſire him*. They are all *Regenerate Souls*, to whom *Chriſt* is *Altogether lovely*, or *All Deſires!* And God that *ſatisfieth the Deſire of every living Thing*; han't wrought ſuch Deſires after Chriſt in the Heart of any *Sinner*, to let him die for Thirſt, for Want of the *Saviour*: But on purpoſe to prepare the *Heart*, to receive that full *Chriſt*, which was long before prepared for that *Soul*, who is thus *athirſt*.—Come then, you thirſty Souls, as invited *graciouſly*, & take your *Fill* of Precious CHRIST, & of all ſpiritual & eternal Life in HIM, *freely*. Behold the Saviour is held forth to Sinners, to be received by *Whoſoever will!* Haſt thou a *Will*, Soul, a *Deſire* after

Chriſt,

Chriſt, above all Things, for *thy Portion?* for thy Time-Lot, & thy eternal ALL? *Thou* art the *Soul*, to whom the Saviour ſays, "*Let him take the Water of Life freely:* Let him ſtretch out the Hand of Faith, & open wide his Heart, to receive & embrace ME, & all my infinite Fulneſs; I give, I will give, *Myſelf*, & all my *Grace & Glory*, unto *that Soul freely:* Let him take me up by *Faith*, as God's unſpeakable GIFT, & poſſeſs Me as his *own* forever." Oh the Grace, the Glory, of this *Whoſoever will!* It reacheth to the moſt vile & unworthy, to the moſt poor & needy Sinner, that is or can be; if he is *athirſt for Chriſt*, if he has a *Will*, a Deſire after Chriſt: *Let him*, ſays the Saviour, *let him take the Water of Life freely!* Hark! Souls, you that are ſunk deep by *Adam's* Sin, into the Death of your Nature's Pollution; you that for actual Sins, & numberleſs Tranſgreſſions, are ſunk deeper into Death, by the Law's Condemnation; you that fear the Law's Execution, that feel its fiery Flaſhes in your Conſcience, & ſee your Danger of the WRATH that is to come; you that ſee your own Inability to help or ſave yourſelves, by the Works of your own Hands, from deſerved, & feared *eternal Death:* Here's *Life* for you, Life ſpiritual & eternal, in *Chriſt* the *Fountain of Life!* Here's *Water of Life*, to cool your heated Conſcience, to eaſe & ſatisfy your thirſty Hearts, which are almoſt parched up with the Heat of God's Wrath, with the juſt Deſert, & ſeen Danger of eternal Death! *Believing in Chriſt*, you ſhall *not periſh*, but *have everlaſting Life.* You that have heard of this mighty Saviour, that ſee his infinite Ability to ſave, his tranſcendent Excellency in Himſelf, & Suitableneſs to your Caſe, that are ſick of Love for HIM, with *Deſires* after Him; and yet are ready to faint & die with *Fear*, that you ſhall never obtain him: Behold how he opens his Heart to *you*, & with the greateſt Tenderneſs, & with infinite Willingneſs, holds forth *Himſelf*, & *all Grace to you*, to be received by you inſtantly & freely, in order to your complete Salvation by him, & Enjoyment of him, eternally: *Take*, ſays HE, *the Water of Life freely!* Oh ſtretch out the Hand of Faith, open wide the Mouth of Faith, unable for it as you are in yourſelves; yet at your Lord's Command, attempt

your

your Duty; & you ſhall, thro' his ſtrengthning Influence, receive Him for yourſelves, as the Fountain of the Water of Life, to the full Satisfaction, & eternal Joy, of your thirſty Hearts. You ſhall drink, & drink abundantly, drink, & drink repeatedly & eternally, of Chriſt the Fountain of Life freely. Oh this Word, *Freely!* How doth it ſuit the Caſe of Sinners, that are the moſt *Poor & Needy!* What tho' you han't a *Mite* of your *own Worth*, to bring to the Saviour, to buy Salvation: You may have it, he will give it, of the richeſt Grace, *Freely!* He only bids you *Receive, & embrace him*; & in ſo doing, He will give *Himſelf* to be *yours forever*.

And yield not to the remaining Legality of your own Spirits, which puts you upon Seeking for Worthineſs in yourſelves, to bring to the Saviour, when you come to him for Salvation, or at leaſt, to encourage you to hope that he will give you Salvation; which, if you ſee it not, will excite you to think, That he will not beſtow Salvation upon you, becauſe of your Unworthineſs. For this Legality, ſo far as it works in thoſe who deſire to be ſaved alone by Grace, robs the Saviour of the Glory of his great, & full, & free Salvation, & wou'd exalt the Sinner, to be a Co-partner with the Saviour, in his own Salvation. And the Lord the Saviour, will not give his Glory to another. *Salvation* in all its *Parts*, from the Foundation, to the Top-Stone, is *all of Grace*: Of the Father's, the Son's, & the Spirit's *Grace*; & it is ſo contrived, wrought, & beſtowed, by infinite Wiſdom & Goodneſs, That the LORD alone, muſt have *all the Praiſe*. And as no Sinner ever had, could, or can have, the *leaſt Hand*, in procuring his own Salvation, but the LORD *alone*, is the ſole Contriver, Worker, & Beſtower of it: How meet a Thing is it, That the LORD *alone*, ſhould have the *whole Glory of it!* That the Saviour ſhould be ALL, & the Sinner *Nothing*, in a Salvation that is *all of Grace!* And could no otherwiſe have been *at all!* What *Robbery* then, is this *Sin* of *Legality*, in any *Sinner*, that would bring his *own Worthineſs* to the *Saviour*, to *procure Salvation*, or without it, is not willing to *receive Salvation!* How directly oppoſite is this Sin, to God's Deſign in ſaving Sinners, which is, that it ſhould be, "To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace."

Grace." Let Thoſe then, who deſire Salvation *freely*, beware of remaining *Legality*.—And as Salvation is all of Grace, & Grace is bottomleſs, boundleſs, endleſs! Let Thoſe who deſire to be thus ſaved, *come in*, at the Call of Free Grace, *juſt as they are*; ſtript of all Self-Worthineſs, & clothed with Nothing elſe but Unworthineſs, from Head to Foot, as with a Garment: With all their great & aggravated Sins, diſtreſſing Fears, threatning Dangers, innumerable Wants, & vaſt Deſires: For God's free Grace in Chriſt, is *rich*; has Riches in it, exceeding Riches, an Immenſity, an Infinity of Riches in it! There is Enough, & infinitely more than Enough, in God's Free Grace, to ſave the moſt unworthy, guilty, poor & needy, wretched & miſerable Sinner, that comes unto it, & ventures his Soul upon it!—And the *greater* the Soul's Miſeries & Neceſſities are, that deſires to be ſaved alone by Grace, the *more* will free Grace be *glorified* in its Salvation.—Come then, you needy Sinners, that are *athirſt for the Water of Life*, come to the Saviour, *juſt as you are*, a Maſs of Sins, Weakneſſes, Miſeries & Wants, come to the *Chriſt of God*, in whom *all Fulneſs*, an infinite Fulneſs of Grace dwells, on purpoſe for *You*. Only accept, receive & embrace the *Saviour*; & Chriſt & all his Grace, will be *yours forever!* And his Free Grace, will glorify its exceeding Riches, in your preſent & everlaſting *Salvation*.—Yea, If you caſt yourſelves upon the Saviour's Grace, *juſt as you are*; as vile & miſerable, as poor & needy as may be, for that full Salvation which he holds forth to be received by you freely: The more *Glory* you will give to the *Saviour*: For JESUS eſteems it his *Honour*, when the moſt miſerable Sinner, accounts HIM *able* to ſave, *mighty* to ſave, & caſts Himſelf upon his *infinite Grace*, for his *own Salvation*. If you would *honour* Chriſt then, as well as be *ſaved* by him, you that deſire him: *Venture* on his *Grace*, take him at his *Word*, his Heart is in it, *Let him*, he ſays, any, & every *Him*, that has a *Will*, *let him take the Water of Life freely!*

And lo, you thirſty Souls, who painfully feel your own *Inability*, to lay Hold of Chriſt for *yourſelves*, by an apptopriating Act of Faith, & to ſay, with *Thomas*, "My

Lord, & my God!" Tho' you desire it: The Saviour will give you the *Hand of Faith*, will *strengthen* your Faith, to receive & embrace HIM *fully*, who is held forth to you so *freely*. This "Let him take the Water of Life freely:" Is not only a most sweet *Invitation* given to thirsty Souls, which calls them to Duty; but it is also a gracious *Grant*, of *that Faith*, which *receives the Saviour*, held forth so freely. HE that has begun in your Souls a spiritual *Thirst*, that has given you a *Will*, a *Desire* after *Himself*; while you *attempt your Duty*, to lay *Hold of Him*, will give you *Faith to receive him*. An Almighty Energy, doth & shall attend the Call of the Saviour, which shall enable the most impotent Sinner that desires him, to receive him.—Lay the Ear of Faith then, you thirsty Souls, to the Saviour's Voice, & you that are made *willing by him*, attempt to *obey him*: While unto you he says, "And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely!" And you shall be filled with *all Joy & Peace in Believing*, enriched with *all Grace*, & saved in the Lord unto *eternal Glory*: In the immediate Vision & Fruition of HIM, to your everlasting *Bliss*, & unto his everlasting *Praise*.—That these choice Blessings, may be the happy Lot of Those who may read the Hints given, & that these weak Lines, may be blest as Means, for these valuable Ends; is the hearty Desire & Prayer of,

Dear Souls,

Your affectionate Friend & Servant, &c.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 1, Line 12, for *Interest*, read *intreat*. p. 11, l. 7. for *said*, r. *sad*. p. 12, l. 28, for *presumptuous*, r. *presumptuous*. p. 16, l. 26. for *Minds*, r. *Mind*. p. 20, l. 5, for *Conversation*, r. *Conversion*. l. 17, for *commanded*, r. *commended*. p. 37, l. 27, for *Acquantance*, r. *Acquaintance*. p. 39, l. 11, for *in dwelling*, r. *inawelling*. p. 49, l. 20, for *Beast*, r. *Beasts*. p. 52, l. 40, for *utmost*, r. *uttermost*. p. 77, l. 3, for *athirst*, r. *a Thirst*.

Thoughts on *Thorns*, with reſpect to *Sin* & *Sinners*.

THORNS are *grieving*. So is *Sin*: So are *Sinners*. *Some* Thorns are *more* grieving than others. *Great* Sins, & *great* Sinners, are *moſt* ſharp and piercing. The *worſt* Thorns, make the *fierceſt* Flame. The *greateſt* Sins, deſerve the *fierceſt* Wrath. They made the Flame of Divine Wrath exceeding *fierce*, upon *Chriſt*, the Surety of his People, when the *Lamb of God* was ſacrificed for *us*. And they *moſt* torment the Conſcience, when enkindled by the fiery Law. The *greateſt* Sins, will be puniſhed with the *greateſt* Wrath in Hell. And the *greateſt* Sinners, will burn the *fierceſt* in that endleſs Flame.——Thoſe that deal with *Thorns*, had need be well *fenced*. Thoſe that overcome *Sin* & *Sinners*, muſt have *on the whole Armour of God*. Thorns are beſt handled with *Care and Gentleneſs*. The beſt Way to deal with *Sin*, is to *watch* its Motions, & to ſubdue it by Faith in the Blood of Chriſt, which ſpeaks *Peace* to the Soul. And the beſt Way to deal with *Sinners*, is holy *Care*, & Chriſtian *Gentleneſs*.

On *Thorns* with reſpect to *Affliction*.

As Thorns are *grieving*: So are *Afflictions*, in Soul, in Body, in Name, in Circumſtance, &c. Briars & Thorns of every Kind, grow & ſpread the Deſart thro'; & not a Step can we take Heaven-ward, but we muſt paſs thro' this thorny Maze. As *ſome* Thorns, are *more* grieving than others: So are *ſome* Afflictions. *Penal Puniſhments*, are unſpeakably more ſharp & piercing, than *Fatherly Chaſtiſements*. The former as a Curſe our Dear *Lord Jeſus* bore, and bore away for *us*, who believe in Him, to the Saving of the Soul; that the latter might be made Bleſſings to us. Of penal Puniſhments, thoſe which our *Lord* endured, were ineffably & inconceivably the *moſt* ſharp & piercing. In Hell, every one ſuffers for his *own* Sin, & bears that Proportion of Wrath, which is due thereto. But when JESUS was made Sin, & a Curſe for *us*, He endured all that righteous Wrath, that fiery Indignation, which was due for the Sins of the whole *Elect-World*, for the Sins of *Jews* & *Gentiles*, for every one, & for all their Sins, who have been, are, or ſhall be ſaved, from the Beginning of the World, even to the End thereof. For an innumerable Multitude of *Perſons*, & for an innumerable Multitude of *Sins*, in every *One* of them, did *Jeſus* bear a meet Proportion of *Wrath*, even the full *Vengeance*, that was due for *all our Sins*. What Tongue then can tell, or Heart conceive, thoſe *piercing* Sorrows, thoſe *ſharp* Puniſhments, which the Redeemer *bore*, to ſet the Redeemed *free!* His ſuffering, dying Love, which for us *Sinners*, *Enemies*,

mies, who by Sin pierce and wound him, endured such ineffable *Griefs*; How far doth it *surpass*, all finite *Knowledge!* And as of penal Punishments, those which Christ bore, were far the sharpest of any of that Kind, which can possibly be borne: So of *Fatherly Chastisements*, which Christians endure, those which respect the *Soul*, are far the most *grievous*. "A wounded Spirit (by the Guilt of Sin, the Temptations of Satan, & the Hidings of God's Face:) who can bear?" None but those, who being delivered from the Law's Curse, & under Gospel Blessing, have the Lord with them in all their Sorrows & Sufferings, as their "Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble:" And as their glorious Deliverer out of all Tribulation. As the *worst* Thorns, make the *fiercest Flame*: So the *greatest* Afflictions, the most *fiery* Trials. As those that deal with *Thorns*, had need be well *fenced*: So those that would endure Afflictions as *Overcomers*, have need of great *Faith, Hope & Patience*; to take up their Cross daily and cheerfully, & to pass over the roughest Way easily, their *Feet being shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace*. And as Thorns are best handled with *Care & Gentleness*: So the best Way for Saints to bear Afflictions, is a careful *Observance* of the Love of God's Heart, in the sharpest Stroke of his Hand, of the Curse being taken out of every Kind & Degree of Affliction by the Redeemer's Blood, & of the Lord's gracious Design in chastising us, to make us Partakers of his Holiness; thro' the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of Grace, to work us up to a greater Conformity to the Image of Christ's Purity, in order to our full Conformity to him in Glory. And thence to cast all our Care upon God, for suitable Support under pressing Weights, for spiritual Advantage by them, & for complete Deliverance from them in the Lord's Way & Time; & mean while, to make it our chief Care, To *glorify God in the Fires*. Happy, thrice Happy are They, who thus endure Afflictions: For when they are fully *tried*, they shall "Receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised unto them that love him:" Where no grieving Thorn, nor pricking Briar, shall be within, or without them, shall ever vex, or come near them! *Thorns*, the natural Fruits of the *Curse*, in *Immanuel's* Land, shall have *no Place*. Lord, *hasten that ineffable Bliss!* Even so! Amen.

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